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THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

MODERN IRELAND IN THE MAKING

THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

BY

MICHAEL MACDONAGH

AUTHOR OF
"DANIEL O'CONNELL, THE
IRISH TRIBUNE"
ETC.

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PREFACE

My friend, John O'Connor Power, once famous as "the Member for Mayo," gave me, shortly before his death in February, 1919, the papers he had collected in the course of his unique political career—commencing as an Irish Fenian and ending as a British Liberal. "Make what use you like of them," he says in his letter to me, "subject to one condition—they must not be made the basis of an attack upon any Irishman."

It was easy for me to set O'Connor Power's mind at rest on that point. I am a historical writer,—of a sort, perhaps; but, most certainly, not a political pamphleteer. As such, I have no antipathies or prejudices. As such, I do not feel myself called upon to defend and justify, any more than I do to condemn and assail. What I like to think I have is sympathy with the aspirations of human nature, and pity for its struggles in the coil of adverse Fate.

My sole object is simply to try to describe, to explain, to interpret, the principles and personalities of the Home Rule Movement from its rise under Isaac Butt in 1870 to its fall under John Dillon in 1918, as just one act in the extraordinary political and social drama of Ireland.

MICHAEL MACDONAGH.

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THE HOME RULE MOVEMENT

CHAPTER I.

RAISING OF THE CURTAIN.

The curtain rose on the movement for Home Rule in the Bilton Hotel, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin, on Thursday, May 19, 1870. A private conference on the state of Ireland was held by a body of men of varying social positions, and, what was of greater significance, in politics and religion more divergent still. Numbering sixty, they were, in the main, citizens of Dublin, merchants, doctors, barristers-at-law, shopkeepers, members of the Dublin Corporation and the boards of guardians. A late Lord Mayor, Alderman James W. Mackey, Catholic Liberal, presided; and the Lord Mayor, Alderman Edward Purdon, Protestant Conservative, was moved to the second chair.

The company included survivors of the preceding Nationalist movements. First there was Daniel O'Connell's agitation in the 'Forties for the Repeal of the Union, which came to an end in the famine and pestilence of "Black '47," and the death of its mighty leader of

a broken heart. Next came the insurrection of the Young Irelanders, under that high-minded gentleman, William Smith O'Brien (brother of Lord Inchiquin) which immediately followed in '48; and led to the dispersal in penal servitude and exile of its brilliant band of leaders—poets, orators, and journalists. Then the tenant right movement of the 'Fifties, for some recognition of the farmer's property in the added value his improvements gave to his holding, which collapsed in so dismal a failure, that its leader, Charles Gavan Duffy, editor of *The Nation*, saw no more hope for Ireland—using a memorable metaphor—"than for a corpse on the dissecting table" and emigrating to Victoria, Australia, became Prime Minister of the Dominion and also Speaker of its House of Representatives. Still the cause went on. The next phase was the conspiracy of the Fenians to establish a Republic which dominated Ireland in the 'Sixties, and broke out into revolt in '67, bringing death in the field, or on the scaffold, to some of its adherents and penal servitude to many others.

This was a past that might well have thrown a cloud of despondency over the meeting. Within a period of thirty years—how brief and fleeting in the life of a nation!—rebellions had followed constitutional movements in quick succession, as if the country was driven to seek in violence some relief of its unsatisfied desire for self-expression. All had failed. What hope, could there be—those invited to the Bilton Hotel might well have asked

themselves—of success crowning a new agitation, when the orator's voice, the poet's pen, the rifle of the soldier—force and argument—had been equally without avail, though backed by genius, inspiration and the dauntless courage of youth? But the resolve of the Irish people for political independence was indestructible. The cause sprang up reinvigorated from each overthrow. In human affairs it was, perhaps, the one thing most comparable to the Phœnix—that fabulous bird of Arabia which periodically consumed herself in a fire of wood only to rise from the ashes in youth and freshness.

So the veterans of the cause came with undying hope to the meeting at the Bilton Hotel. There were revolutionaries, as well as constitutionalists, some of them not long back from enforced exile, penal servitude or transportation. The most notable figure in this group was the grey-bearded John Martin, with the rugged air of the Ulster Scot, and yet unexpectedly low-voiced and gentle-mannered. He was the son of a Presbyterian clergyman. When the *United Irishman* was suppressed in '48 and its editor, John Mitchel, the most extreme of the Young Irelanders, was sent to penal servitude, Martin brought out the *Irish Felon* which likewise advocated the forcible separation of Ireland from Great Britain, and, convicted of treason felony, was transported to Tasmania, where he rejoined his relative and mentor, Mitchel. The surge of patriotism must

have been like fire in his veins to have brought such a man—amiable and contemplative—to a prominent position in a revolution. Of a different type was another Young Irelander. Patrick James Smyth was a man of action. He took a hand in the actual fighting down in Tipperary. A warrant was issued for his arrest, but he got away to the United States, where he organised a plan for the escape of John Mitchel from Tasmania, and successfully carried it out in the summer of 1853. Lean and wiry, wearing instead of a beard the chin-piece then so popular with the French—following the fashion set by Napoleon III. —P. J. Smyth looked the part of the soldier, as well as played it. Yet he was also an orator, worthy to rank with Henry Grattan, perhaps the most brilliant speaker that Ireland has produced.

The Fenians also had their representatives. One of them, James O'Connor, son of a county Wicklow farmer, had been on the commercial staff of the *Irish People*, the weekly organ of the Fenians. When the newspaper was seized by the Government in 1865, he was arrested, with other leaders of the movement, got five years' penal servitude; and having been released in 1869 became associated with *The Irishman*, also an advanced Nationalist publication. Another prominent member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood present was John Nolan, chief organiser of the movement then in agitation for the release of the Fenians still in prison, a commercial traveller employed by a large firm of drapers, McSweeney and Delaney, in

Sackville Street, and popularly called "Amnesty Nolan."

Extremes met at the gathering. The Orange Party which were as much advanced on the Right as the Fenians were on the Left—no two bodies could be more antagonistic in aim and purpose—was represented by James V. Mackey and W. L. Eason, two men as well known in business as in political life. There was a second late Lord Mayor, Sir John Barrington, Protestant Conservative; and also two late High Sheriffs, E. H. Kinahan, Protestant Tory, and James Martin, Catholic Liberal, also in the company. Catholic priests were conspicuous by their absence. This, no doubt, was due to the fact that Cardinal Cullen, the Archbishop of Dublin, discouraged their interference in politics. Two Episcopalian clergymen were present—Archdeacon Goold, a Tory; and the Rev. Joseph Galbraith, Senior Fellow of Trinity College and Professor of Experimental Science, whose political views were Conservative.

Among the journalists were Major Knox, proprietor of the *Irish Times*, and a Protestant Conservative; Dr. Henry Maunsell, editor of the *Evening Mail*, also a Protestant and politically best described as a Tory. The most celebrated of the group of Pressmen was Alexander Martin Sullivan, editor of *The Nation*, a great Irishman, Irish of the Irish, and intensely Catholic. Born at Bantry, county Cork in 1830, the son of a working house-painter, he arrived in Dublin in early manhood with a knowledge of

shorthand, a taste for drawing, and a mind and understanding of the highest intellectual order, and by the time he was twenty-seven he succeeded Gavan Duffy as proprietor and editor of *The Nation*, the most famous and influential newspaper ever published in Ireland. Between 1857 and 1870, *The Nation* office, with A. M. Sullivan in control, was the focus of constitutionalism as opposed to revolution. A graphic and forcible writer, Sullivan had already written *The Story of Ireland*, the most widely read of books, one which, more than any I know of, has aroused in boys and girls of each generation since it was published, those rankling memories of cruel wrongs and proud recollections of ancient greatness, that are the inspiration and strength of the Nationalist Movement; and always apt and felicitous in discussion, Sullivan had, besides, those rare gifts of fancy and imagination which, on great occasions, transform the speaker into the orator.

Sullivan was short in stature, with rugged features, black-bearded and blue-eyed, and sensitive and passionate in nature. In striking physical and mental contrast with him was the representative of the landed gentry, Captain Edward R. King-Harman, of Creevaghmore, county Longford, Protestant Conservative, a remarkable specimen even of his class, so prolific in physically fine men—exceptionally tall, handsome, blonde, passive. In fact, the ideal guardsman of fiction. There was but a single M.P. in the company,

William Shaw, a Protestant Liberal, one of the members for county Cork, and chairman of the Munster Bank. I can mention only a few of those present, who either had attained to distinction then, or were to win it in the years to come. Two others only it is necessary to add—Sir William Wilde, already eminent as an oculist, and an antiquary also; and Alfred Webb, of Quaker extraction, a master printer, who was to render distinguished service to the cause of Home Rule.

Half of those present were Protestant Conservatives. Of the other half, a few were Protestants with Liberal or National tendencies; and the rest were Catholics, about equally divided as Liberals and as Repealers. The company may be said to have been, in the main, Liberal and Conservative with a tang of Fenianism and Orangeism. It was a remarkable feat to have brought together so mixed and representative a gathering to discuss the state of Ireland at a time of acute political division, the day after, so to speak, the suppression of the Fenian insurrection, when the mass of the people were in sullen discontent, and the upper classes, landed and commercial, were suspicious of a revival of political agitation in any form. There was sore need, in the distracted condition of the country, for the diffusion of a more tolerant and humane spirit, for mutual approaches and understandings between representative men of different politics and creeds. Yet the spirit of accommodation in matters political and religious had never been very rife in Ireland; and, indeed,

so strongly were opinions held that the conciliatory mood was usually regarded by all parties with suspicion as something verging upon deceit.

At the wave of whose magic wand had all national discords now subsided into harmony? The convener of the gathering was Isaac Butt, one of the most remarkable Irishmen of the nineteenth century, then at the head of the Irish Bar as a profound lawyer, and persuasive advocate. It would have been impossible of accomplishment by any other Irishman of the time. Butt was singularly endowed with qualities which made people trust in him and love him. His very appearance instinctively inspired confidence and affection. He suggested different characters, as one saw him in different aspects. Looking at the clean-shaven, round, mobile, face, decidedly Irish in cast, with its large sensitive mouth and thick lips, one thought of an old comedian. But the lasting impression—conveyed by his black frock-coat suit of clerical cut, and white tie; and the intellectuality of his brow, high and broad; and, not less, the tousled mass of straggling wisps of grey hair, and the grey side whiskers—was that of a jolly Anglican clergyman turned University professor. The expression of the face was quite leonine, and yet soft and winning. Butt was, in fact, about equal parts lion and lamb—bold and daring in mind, with a temperament placid and easy-going. He was the most disinterested of men. His own personal advantage was the last consideration in the prodigal use to which he put

his immense abilities; and he was as lavish in spending his money upon others as his genius. Sincerity, honesty of purpose, freedom from guile, were expressed in all his looks, words and acts.

Butt was not an M.P. in 1870, but he had had, as member for Youghal, a parliamentary experience of some years duration, first as a Tory—the natural outcome of the upbringing and environment of a son of an Episcopalian clergyman—and, later, as a Liberal-Conservative. He had most ably defended the leaders of the Fenian movement, on trial for high treason or sedition; and though receiving the highest fees then paid to any lawyer—yet, nevertheless, usually in want of money because of his extravagant disposition and unregulated habits—he had given his services for nothing in token of his admiration of the prisoners. They might have been mistaken in their aims and futile in their methods, but in their motives they were noble, pure, wholly honourable and self-sacrificing. Therefore it was that Butt possessed the confidence of not only the great, centre, moderate class of Catholic Liberals, but of the two extremes, Tory and Fenian, to the extent, at least, of their willingness to come together at his summons for a private talk on the Irish situation, in the hope that a rallying point might be found, when all were animated by love of a common country, and differed only as to the means by which she could best be served.

Butt sat silently apart during the talk, but listening and watching intently. He must have

been delighted to feel that notwithstanding the wide diversity of political opinion among the company, the atmosphere was distinctly nationalist, in the broadest sense. Out of the views expressed in regard to self-government two emerged most prominently. One was the Fenian aspiration for a separate national existence for itself alone. The other, which found favour with commercial men, was the need for the removal of the hampering restrictions imposed upon the welfare and prosperity of Ireland by the system of parliamentary government at Westminster, with its mingled ignorance and jealousy of Irish business interests. At the end of the discussion Butt rose to speak. He was eloquent as well as argumentative, and what he said was all the more moving and persuasive by reason of his singularly musical voice. He concluded by proposing:—

> "That it is the opinion of this meeting that the true remedy for the evils of Ireland is the establishment of an Irish Parliament with full control over our domestic affairs."

To the surprise of many of those present the motion was carried with acclamation. Not a single voice was raised in opposition. Butt looked as if the most felicitous moment of his career and its crowning had come. His countenance beamed with unbounded good humour and satisfaction. It was truly a remarkable result of a conference, composed of men whose political aims were supposed to be irreconcilable. Indeed, Butt had

cautiously drawn up questions for discussion which, in his opinion, would excite no suspicion in the minds of the Liberals and Conservatives whom he invited to attend that something out of the range of their political programme was in contemplation. These were—

(1) The general dissatisfaction at the absenteeism of great landowners, and the consequent loss of trade and national prosperity.

(2) The advantage of a Royal residence, in a political and financial point of view.

(3) An arrangement for an aggregate meeting to send a deputation to Queen Victoria.*

Yet the issue of the meeting was the institution of a national movement to obtain not a Royal residence, but a Parliament, for Ireland.

Butt was unanimously entrusted with the honour and responsibilities of leadership. He immediately published a book with the title *Irish Federalism, Its Meaning, Its Objects and Its Hopes.* It is hardly more than a pamphlet in extent, with its seventy pages and stiff paper covers; but it has a place among the original and inspiring books of the Irish Nationalist Movement—well composed in argument and style, for Butt could write as finely as he could speak, and suffused with that spirit of high patriotism which distinguishes most things that Butt either said or wrote for his cause.

*"Final Report of the Home Government Association" (1874).

It was Butt's object to draw up a scheme of self-government which would satisfy Irish national sentiment and pride, and, at the same time, provide against English objection to any real weakening of the connection between Ireland and Great Britain. After a good deal of inquiry and much reflection, he decided to make Federalism the basis of his plan. This would give Ireland a Parliament with control over domestic affairs, and preserve, by means of the existing Imperial Parliament, the integrity of the United Kingdom. There could be two sessions of Parliament at Westminster every year—one for British, or English affairs, from which the Irish members would be excluded, and the other solely for Imperial concerns to which Ireland would send her full representation of 103 members. Finally, to conclude this brief summary of the plan, the Irish Parliament was to have the complete disposal of the revenue and resources of Ireland, subject to the raising of such taxation as the Imperial Parliament might impose for Imperial purposes.

In July, 1870, the Home Government Association was formed to carry out the policy adopted at the Bilton Hotel. As "Federalism" was a new-fangled term, uninspiring and not easy to pronounce, a watchword for the movement; short, exclamatory, arresting to the ear, and one also that was pat to the mood of the time, was found in "Home Rule" The Rev. Joseph Galbraith, of Trinity College, was the originator of the name; or, perhaps, it would be more correct to say that

he revived a forgotten phrase, for it had appeared in *The Celt* (organ of the Celtic Union) in 1858, and in *The Nation* in 1860. It proved a happy inspiration. There was a transfiguring vagueness about the phrase which enabled the most extreme Nationalists, as well as the most moderate, to accept it. To moderate men, "Home Rule" meant nothing more than an Irish Parliament for the management of Irish affairs in subordination to England. Fenians, who believed in adapting themselves to conditions and circumstances, as they changed, saw in "Home Rule" the beginning of a movement which might possibly end in the establishment of an Irish Republic. Even some Conservatives and Liberals gladly welcomed what they conceived to be the substitution of the narrower signification of "Home Rule," for the extremer tendencies of "Repeal of the Union"—the restoration of Grattan's Parliament, an independent Assembly co-ordinate with the British Parliament—to which, previously, constitutional Nationalists gave their support.

CHAPTER II.

THE NATION IN COUNCIL.

The Rotunda is, next to the old Parliament House, the most famous building in Dublin, because of the many memorable assemblies associated with the varying phases of the Irish Nationalist Movement, revolutionary as well as constitutional, that have met in its Round Room. Not the least famous of those gatherings was the Home Rule Conference of 1873.

The cause had made steady progress. The extent and depth of the national resolution was strikingly manifested in the return to Parliament, at bye-elections, of such pronounced Home Rulers as John Martin for Meath; and P. J. Smyth for Westmeath, despite powerful opposition on the part of the landlords and priests, and the open system of voting; and in the election of Butt for Limerick city, without a contest. Accordingly the Home Government Association, a self-appointed body, recognised that the time had come to place itself on a basis more popular and representative. At that time no meeting of delegates, elected or appointed, could be held in Ireland. It was prohibited by the Convention Act, passed so long ago as 1793, by the Irish Parliament, to prevent assemblies of the revolutionary United

Irishmen.* In the circumstances, the course adopted by the Council of the Home Government Association was to invite signatures from persons of character and position throughout the country —Members of Parliament, magistrates, clergymen of all denominations, country gentlemen, merchants, traders, mayors and members of municipal corporations and other local authorities, in favour of the holding of a conference to consider the best and most expedient means of obtaining that domestic Legislature which, it was declared, was necessary to the peace and prosperity of Ireland and would tend also to the strength and stability of the United Kingdom. Within a month upwards of 25,000 names were obtained. The conference was accordingly summoned to meet on November 18, 1873; and 900 tickets of admission were issued to men of station and influence in all parts of Ireland, and in the principal centres of Irish population in England and Scotland, who expressed a wish to attend it.†

William Shaw, M.P. for county Cork, and chairman of the Munster Bank, presided. The son of a Congregational Minister in Ulster, he was himself formerly in charge of the Independence Church, George-street, Cork, when he showed sympathy with the Young Irelanders of 1848; and on marrying the daughter of a wealthy Cork merchant he gave up the ministry for commerce. On the platform, and in the body of the hall, were

*This Statute was not repealed until 1879.
†"Final Report of the Home Government Association."

the members of the Conference, numbering between eight and nine hundred. The spacious galleries to which the general public had admittance, were crowded. Among the ladies in this part of the hall, one was conspicuous for her tall, stately figure, and features cast in an heroic mould. She was a splendid embodiment of the patriotism of the women of Ireland. This was Lady Wilde, wife of Sir William Wilde (surgeon-oculist) and famous as "Speranza" of *The Nation*, a writer of passionate rhetoric in verse and prose.‡ Twenty-two years before, in 1848, when she was but twenty-one, Jane Francesca Elgee, daughter of an Episcopalian clergyman, made a dramatic scene in Green-street Courthouse, Dublin. Gavan Duffy, editor of *The Nation* was in the dock. His paper had been suppressed and he was on trial for sedition. The Attorney-General, who conducted the prosecution, quoted an article headed "Jacta alea est" ("The die is cast")‖ from the last issue of *The Nation*, appealing to the young men of Ireland to take up arms for the regeneration of their oppressed land. "Oh, for a hundred thousand muskets," said the article, "glittering brightly in the light of heaven, and the monumental barricades stretching across each of our noble streets made desolate by England; circling round that doomed Castle made infamous by England, where

‡They were the parents of Oscar Wilde, poet, playwright and art critic, and most unfortunate of men.

‖The exclamation of Julius Caesar when he passed the Rubicon.

the foreign tyrant has held his council of treason and iniquity against our people and our country for seven hundred years." That article, the Attorney-General argued, was sufficient to convict the prisoner. "I am the culprit, if culprit there be," exclaimed a voice in the gallery of the court. The words were uttered by Miss Elgee, who thus proclaimed herself the writer. The jury disagreed, and some months subsequently Gavan Duffy was released.

On the platform were to be seen veterans of past movements, still ardent in the cause. The finest of the traditions of the Repeal agitation were perpetuated by W. J. O'Neill Daunt, of Kilcascan, county Cork. Reared as a Protestant and Tory, he became a Catholic, entered public life and by O'Connell was appointed Repeal Director for Leinster, one of a small body of first lieutenants to the leader, whose duty it was to suppress any excesses in the agitation. O'Neill Daunt brought to the Conference the appearance and air of a country squire. A little old priest, bent and stooped, who sat in a place of honour near the chairman was known as the "Father of Federalism." The Rev. Thadeus O'Malley was born at Limerick in 1796. In the height of the Repeal movement, when he was chaplain to an institution in Dublin, O'Malley advocated Federalism, as a compromise, and brought out a weekly newspaper *The Federalist* in support of his plan. Independent in his views, free in their expression, impatient of control, O'Malley had

been deprived, by suspension, of his priestly functions, and had just emerged from retirement by publishing a booklet, *Home Rule on the Basis of Federalism* (1873), and now, in the extreme winter of his life, he was sunning himself in a burst of warm popular favour before passing from the scene. One saying of his I must record. Already it was being declared by the Orangemen of Ulster that "Home Rule means Rome Rule." "There is some rhyme in this notion," said O'Malley; "but not a particle of reason."

The romance of the Irish Nationalist Movement was typified in the splendidly venerable figure of The O'Gorman Mahon. As a young man he stood by O'Connell in the historic Clare election of 1828 (the first return of a Catholic to Parliament, which compelled the opening of the doors of the two Houses to members of the proscribed faith): and, after spending many years in South America, as an Irish soldier of fortune, helping impartially one or other of the constantly warring Republics, as Brigadier-General or Admiral—unconcerned as to the causes of quarrel—and fighting for the North in the American Civil War, he had just reappeared in Ireland. He was several inches over six feet in height and well built in proportion and had a mass of hair and long beard, snow white. At a distance, his face, with its beaked nose, suggested a fierce eagle, but when I met him —many years later—I was pleasantly surprised to see that, old as he was, he had a merry blue eye, and to find that he was more disposed to be jocose

than serious. "Though the snows of seventy winters have whitened the locks on my head," he declared in a brief but thrilling address at the Conference, "they have not chilled the warmth of my heart, which still beats, and will continue to beat until my eyes close in death, responsive to the cause of my country."

The deliberations were carried on over four successive days. A report of the speeches was officially prepared, and published under the supervision of a distinguished graduate of both Trinity College, Dublin, and Christ Church, Oxford,—Swift MacNeill, then a law student, afterwards a well-known member of the Irish Parliamentary Party and a recognised authority on constitutional history and practice. It runs to 213 pages and is one of the most valuable records of the Home Rule Movement, its aspirations and ideals. The names of those who attended the Conference are given in the report. Twenty-eight of the 103 members of Parliament proclaimed by their presence their adhesion to Home Rule. The great majority were Liberals who were returned at the General Election of 1868 by popular and Catholic constituencies, to support Gladstone in his declared intention to disestablish the Protestant Church and reform the land laws. Three of them must be singled out, at this point, for special mention. The most influential, politically, was Sir John Gray, who sat for the borough of Kilkenny. A Mayo man and a Protestant, he abandoned medicine for journalism in 1841, when he became

proprietor of the *Freeman's Journal*. He took an active part in the agitation for the Repeal of the Union, and was one of the "Repeal Martyrs" tried and imprisoned with O'Connell in 1844. In 1863 he was knighted for his services in providing Dublin with its fine supply of water from the Vartry, a stream in county Wicklow. He brought to the support of the Home Rule Movement the advocacy of the *Freeman's Journal*, which at first had held critically aloof, but which, henceforward, was the able and loyal organ of the Irish Parliamentary Party. From the point of view of ancient lineage and high social distinction, the most noteworthy of the Members of Parliament was Charles Owen O'Conor of Roscommon, who, as the direct descendant of the last of the Irish Kings, bore the title of "The O'Conor Don." In his time he was the leading lay exponent of Catholic opinion in Ireland. Another distinguished M.P. was Joseph Roynane, Cork city, an advanced Nationalist, who was the first to recommend a policy of combat and obstruction by the Irish representatives in the House of Commons. He was one of the wittiest of men. His leg had to be amputated. When it was cut off he humorously remarked to a friend—"Ah, I'll never rise to a point of order in the House of Commons again." "Nor stand for the city," he added, "but"—as if a flash of satisfaction came to him—"sure, I can stump the county."

A few of the other Members of Parliament were of the landed gentry class. The aristocracy was

unrepresented. Only a letter of regret for being prevented by illness from attending the Conference, with the object of which he said he was in complete agreement, was received from Lord Ffrench, of the Irish peerage, the head of an old Catholic family in the west of Ireland. The Council of the Home Government Association had issued a special appeal to the aristocracy. "Your stake in the welfare of Ireland is great," it said. "Have you no noble ambition to be in your own land rulers and legislators, instead of the agents of English power to prolong her depression? Or will you longer hold aloof from your own people, and remain without a country—neither Irishman nor Englishman—an anomaly in the wide expanse of Christendom?" The appeal was ignored. What would have been, in later years, more conspicuous than the absence of representatives of the aristocracy from such a gathering was the absence of representatives of the working-class. At that time, however, it was unnoticed, for it was quite in the accepted order of things. Then, and for long afterwards, when the fortunes of Ireland were being discussed, the working-man was expected to look on and listen to his betters and not to raise his voice. His part was to turn out in his thousands for a national procession, stagger under his great trade-union banners, depicting Lord Edward FitzGerald, Robert Emmet, and Daniel O'Connell, in heroic attitudes, as he marched for miles through the streets after the bands playing the "Wearin' of the Green" and "God Save

Ireland" and finally at the meeting to huzza the speakers; and when at a later period he got the franchise the additional duty was cast upon him of voting solidly for the Nationalist candidates. In fact, we shall have come almost to the end of our story before we find Labour—which supplied the driving force of the country socially and politically, which had given the backbone, the muscle and the grit to every Nationalist movement, revolutionary or constitutional—claiming and asserting a share in the decision of public questions. So it was that an artizan, no more than a peer, was to be seen in the body of the hall at the Home Rule Conference. It was the great middle class, professional and commercial, that was best represented. There were also present some large farmers, and a few clergymen, Protestant and Catholic.

Butt dominated and pervaded the Conference by reason of his intellectual gifts and engaging personality. All eyes were attracted to his beaming friendly countenance, so expressive of goodwill. His abundant snow-white hair and rather bent shoulders gave him a look of advanced age, though his years numbered only six-and-fifty. But he displayed much physical vigour in voice and action, and there was not a jaded sentence in the two splendid speeches he made at the opening and close of the proceedings, both of which, in patriotic ardour, rose worthily to the height of the great occasion. And he carried his genius, his

position at the Bar, and his political leadership, with a homely simplicity.

In his first speech, Butt invoked the blessing of God on the deliberations. "It is with a reverence suited to the solemnity of the occasion," he said, "that I would humbly offer up my fervent prayer to that Great Being—without whom we are told that no sparrow falls to the ground, and Who most assuredly looks down on those assemblies that can influence the well-being of millions of His creatures—that He might guide and direct our thoughts and words and actions, that we may be worthy of the nation in whose name we speak, and the sacred cause which we are assembled to promote." The speech was an able and interesting exposition of the advantages both to Ireland and England of Irish self-government under Federalism, as compared with Repeal; and also an exalted vindication of the truth and purity of the spirit of Irish Nationality. I quote some of its eloquent and moving passages, which in his beautiful voice, modulated to the cadences of the diction, sounded like a burst of music:—

> Mr. Gladstone said that Fenianism taught him the intensity of Irish disaffection. It taught me more and better things. It taught me the depth, the breadth, the sincerity of that love of fatherland which misgovernment had tortured into disaffection, and, driving men to despair, had aggravated into revolt.

State trials were not new to me. Twenty years before, I stood near Smith O'Brien when he braved the sentence of death which the law had pronounced upon him. I saw Thomas Francis Meagher meet the same fate. And then I asked myself this—" Surely, the State is out of joint, all our social system is unhinged, when O'Brien and Meagher are condemned by their country to a traitor's doom?"

Years passed away, and once more I stood by men who had dared the desperate enterprise of freeing their country by revolt.

They were men who were run down by obloquy. They had been branded the enemies of religion and social order. I saw them manfully bear up against all. I saw the unflinching firmness by which they testified the sincerity of their faith in their cause, their deep convictions of its righteousness and truth, and I saw them meet their fate with a fanaticism that made them martyrs.

I heard their words of devotion to their country as with firm step and unyielding heart they left the dock and went down the dark passage that led them to the place where all hope closed upon them, and I asked myself again, " Is there no way to arrest this? Are our best and bravest spirits ever to be carried away under this system of constantly resisted oppression and the constantly defeated revolt? Can we find no means by which the national

quarrel that has led to all these terrible results may be set right?"

I believe, in my conscience, we have found it. I believe that England has now the opportunity of adjusting the quarrel of centuries.§

The four days' debate was conducted not only with order and moderation but with the utmost amity. Though the older phases of the national movement, Repeal and Fenianism, were largely and ably represented, no one showed any combative mood to take up the cudgels for either complete legislative independence or for the Republic. The principle of a Parliament for Irish affairs, with a responsible ministry, under a Federal system was unanimously adopted. It was backed by two sets of arguments —first, that Ireland had a historical and natural right to govern herself; that her Parliament was wrested from her in an hour of great weakness and distress, after a rebellion, at the end of the eighteenth century; and, secondly, that the system of government from Westminster had failed to give peace, contentment and prosperity to Ireland. But, reading the speeches, it is very noticeable that an Irish Parliament was claimed principally in satisfaction of the national sentiment, and as an end in itself. Ireland, it was said, must be allowed to work out her own salvation in her own way. The kind of salvation, or the particular means by which it was to be attained

§"Proceedings of the Home Rule Conference, 1873," p. 389.

—when the matter was freely in Ireland's own hands—troubled the mind of no one at the Conference. This was a characteristic of the movement to the very end. None of the very able men enlisted in its cause hardly ever attempted constructively to show how Home Rule, which was to consist of political machinery of the English type—a Parliament of two Houses, law courts, police, tax-gatherers—worked according to old-established principles, by legislators and officials of the same social class, and fundamentally of the same types of mind and ideas, however they might differ in race, was to set to rights the economic disorders of Ireland, merely because the same kind of strings, legislative and administrative, were to be pulled in Dublin instead of at Westminster. How were unemployment and hunger to be banished? —those grisly spectres that dogged the footsteps of the Irish wage-earner, far more than the British, as he went out to look for work; and that sat down to table with his wife and children. If any of the leaders was asked for his opinion on this point he would be sure to reply—"Well, we could not possibly make a worse mess of Ireland than is being made of it by the Imperial Parliament; and, at any rate, the hands pulling the strings would be Irish." Or answering in another and more decisive way, he would say, "The Irish people want Home Rule, and that, for the present, is enough about it."

The main thing, indeed the whole thing, was to have a Parliament sitting once more in the "Old

House in College Green." Vague and indefinite hopes prevailed to some extent, that a good time would follow—that the worker would have more regular employment and better wages; that the farmer would get higher prices for his produce, that the shopkeeper would have quicker sales and larger profits, and so on. But these expectations hardly counted. For a right understanding of the Irish Nationalist Movement, it must always be borne in mind that it cannot be explained in terms of sheer materialism. To the mass of its adherents, both revolutionaries and constitutionalists, considerations of profit, whether personal or national, have invariably been of secondary importance. Almost entirely the impulse came from an intense pride of race seeking for expression in self-government within the four corners of Ireland unhampered by influence from the outside. It is true that the main-spring of Irish unrest was the long centuries of English misrule. But the time had now come when Ireland would not consent even to be governed well by England. The national grievance was really that England should govern Ireland at all.

Looking through the long list of those who were present at the Home Rule Conference, one may see the names of men, young or obscure, who were to achieve fame in the movement, and, in some cases, to exercise a decisive influence on its development. The earliest that springs to the eye is "Joseph Gillies Biggar." It was the first time that that misshapened form, with its homely face,

its broad smile, its shrewd and fearless glance, was seen; and the rasping voice, and odd and jerky mode of speaking, was heard, at a nationalist gathering. Biggar was then forty-six, a Presbyterian, head of a successful firm of provision merchants in Belfast, a member of the Municipal Corporation of Belfast, and chairman of the Water Commissioners; and was to commence soon his extraordinary career in the House of Commons. Others were John Dillon, a young medical student—son of John Blake Dillon, the Young Irelander—destined to be the last leader of the Home Hule cause; Patrick Egan, managing director of a flour milling company in Dublin, then a Fenian, and to be the treasurer of the Land League; Dwyer Gray, editor for many years of the *Freeman's Journal* (son of Sir John Gray); R. Barry O'Brien, a law student in Dublin, who was to become historian and biographer; Frank Hugh O'Donnell, a London journalist, now best known as one of the Irish Obstructionists in Parliament; Richard Pigott, then editor of the advanced nationalist newspaper, *The Irishman*, and, at the end, the notorious political adventurer who palmed off the forged Parnell letters on *The Times* in 1887; Thomas Sexton, a young journalist editing the *Weekly News*, a nationalist organ, published with *The Nation*, and in the years to come, the most able and readiest of the orators and debaters of the Parnellite Party; T. D. Sullivan of *The Nation*, elder brother of A. M. Sullivan, and poet laureate of the nationalist cause by

reason of the great popularity of his ballads and songs. Parnell is not in the list of names. Redmond is—William Archer Redmond, M.P. for the borough of Wexford, whose eldest son, John Edward Redmond, was a student at Clongowes Wood College (conducted by the Jesuits) and in that very year, 1873, won the medal of the college for eloquence and argument in debate.

At the Conference also were three remarkable young men—all Fenians—who had brought the Irish living in Great Britain to the support of Home Rule, and induced the physical force men to give the new constitutional movement a chance. One was John Ferguson, of Glasgow, a partner in the publishing house of Cameron and Ferguson, which printed and sold at low prices Irish history books and volumes of poetry, and stories of nationalist tendencies, that had an immense propagandist value, while Ferguson himself travelled about Great Britain as an agent for his firm, and availed of every opportunity of inculcating his advanced opinions on Irish nationalism and social reform. The other two, John Barry and John O'Connor Power, were the chief promoters of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, the outcome of an Irish Convention held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in January, 1873. Butt attended the Convention and was elected president. John Barry, who was born in county Wexford in 1845, and brought up in Northumberland, was then a commercial traveller for an English firm of floor-cloth manufacturers,

living in Manchester, and a member of the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. By virtue of his position as hon. secretary of the Home Rule Confederation he was chief of its central administrative authority. The organisation was especially strong in the north of England and in Scotland where the Irish were very numerous.

O'Connor Power was to be the most distinguished of the three young comrades. He was a Connaught man, born of working-class parentage in 1846. At fifteen years of age he left Ballinasloe for Rochdale, Lancashire, to live with relatives who were house painters and decorators, assisting them in the summer, and in the slack winter time working in a flannel mill. He soon became associated with the revolutionary conspiracy. He was of the band of Fenians, over a thousand strong, which assembled at Chester on February 11, 1867, with the desperate design of seizing the store of fire-arms and ammunition in the arsenal of the Castle, and conveying them by train and steamer to Ireland; but the plot was discovered to the Government by John Joseph Corydon, an American army officer, who came over to take part in the insurrection and turned spy. O'Connor Power was also in Manchester on September 18, 1867, when an equally daring Fenian plot was successfully carried out. The prison van conveying the apprehended Fenian leaders, Colonel Kelly and Captain Deasy (both late of the American Army) to Salford Gaol, was stopped, in a public road

and in the broad daylight, by a band of thirty men, broken open and the hand-cuffed prisoners spirited clear away. The policeman, Sergeant Brett, who had charge of the van, was killed in the affray. Three of the Irishmen arrested, Allen, Larkin and O'Brien, were executed. They are reverenced as the "Manchester Martyrs." In the following year O'Connor Power was arrested in Dublin on suspicion, and under the Act suspending Habeas Corpus was detained in Kilmainham for six months without trial. Falling ill in prison he was urged by the authorities for his health sake to accept his discharge on the condition that he emigrated to America. This he refused. "I would rather die on the floor of my cell than make such a bargain with the British Government," was his reply. He was the very last to be released of the Fenians, arrested on suspicion.

O'Connor Power subsequently spent four years as a student at the diocesan college of St. Jarlath's, Tuam, of which Archbishop McHale was the president. In the last year of his course he assisted in the Professorship of Irish History, and as a lecturer gave evidence of the possession of high intellectual attainments coupled with a rare sense of oratory. During his college vacations he was greatly in demand as a platform speaker at Irish meetings in the north of England, where, like Barry, he was high in the councils of the Fenians. He had all the qualities that make a leader of the people—a good presence, tall, muscular, and resolute looking; sincerity, belief

in his cause, unbending determination, a cultivated mind, and oratorical gifts of the highest order. The matter of his speeches was always good. But if oratory is to weave its spells it demands in the speaker fine action as well as high thoughts and beautiful diction. O'Connor Power had a deep sonorous voice, which, used as it was, with fine modulation, was most impressive and appealing.

Such were the purposes and personalities of the Home Rule Conference of 1873. Having regard to the circumstances of the country, the fact that a new political movement was having its inauguration, the varied types of men in the assembly—high characters, strong wills, conflicting opinions—the unanimity of the Conference and its order and harmony were remarkable. "Not a word has been uttered which any of us need to desire to blot out of our records," said Butt exultantly at the end; and he added—"In the same spirit of reverence in which in my opening words I offered up a prayer for that guidance without which all human effort is in vain, in these closing words I say that the God of our Fathers has looked down upon us. We will go forth from this under His blessing, and with that blessing the efforts originated in this Conference will achieve the liberties of our native land."§§

§§"Proceedings of the Home Rule Conference, 1873," pp. 199—200.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST HOME RULE PARTY.

The appeal to the country of the new Home Rule League (formed at the Conference of 1873) had an almost magical effect. It was as if Ireland, crushed and broken after an unsuccessful insurrection, sprang revivified to her feet, and proudly raised her head with the old cry of nationality resounding on her lips—"I want to rule myself." In January, 1874, there was a General Election, Parliament having been dissolved by Gladstone, and out of the 103 Irish members sixty were returned as supporters of Home Rule. For the first time since the Union a decisive majority of the Irish representatives were in favour of Ireland being governed at home according to Irish ideas.

The franchise, at that time, was more restricted in Ireland than in England. In counties, only tenants of holdings paying not less than £50 a year; and in boroughs, only occupiers of houses rated at more than £4 a year, were entitled to vote. But it was the first General Election held under the secret system of voting instituted by the Ballot Act. The agricultural electors were at last delivered from the landlord's resentment should they vote against his candidate—often a matter of life and death to them—and, thus free to act

according to their political opinions, the county electorate, composed, though it was, of the more substantial farmers, went solidly for Home Rule in the south and west of Ireland.

The first Home Rule Party, thus created, was curiously diversified in membership. Forty-nine of the sixty were Catholics, and the remaining eleven were Protestants. Several had been Liberals and a few had been Conservatives in the preceding Parliament. The "Rebel" members were re-elected—John Martin (Meath); P. J. Smyth (Westmeath); Joseph Roynane (Cork city), as well as the moderates like Butt (Limerick); Shaw (county Cork); Sir John Gray (Kilkenny city); The O'Conor Don (county Roscommon) and Redmond (Wexford city). The most distinguished of the new-comers were A. M. Sullivan (county Louth), O'Connor Power (county Mayo) and Biggar (county Cavan). There were other members who also added to the moral and intellectual force of the Party—Richard Power (Waterford city), a country gentleman; Captain John Philip Nolan (county Galway), a distinguished artillery officer; John George McCarthy (Mallow), a solicitor and an able writer; Rowland Ponsonby Blennerhassett (Kerry) belonging to a family originally English, but so long settled in Ireland that some of his ancestors were members for Kerry in the old Irish Parliament.

Fighting Catholicity was represented by Chevalier Keyes O'Clery (county Wexford), the son of a Limerick gentleman farmer. He was

hunting buffalo on the great prairies of the Far West in 1867, when, hearing of the invasion of the Papal State by Garibaldi, he immediately started to fight for the Pope, and joining the Pontifical Zouaves assisted in driving back the "Red Shirts." He was again in Rome as a soldier on September 20, 1870—when, after a long struggle, the Italian Revolution was completed by the occupation of the Holy City by the Piedmontese Army, under Victor Emmanuel. For his services, O'Clery was created by the Pope a Military Knight of the Illustrious Order of St. Gregory the Great, which confers the title of Chevalier. And all this time he was a leading member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, though he had taken no part in its public operations. If O'Clery was young and dashing, a more staid representative of the Church Militant was Major Myles O'Reilly (county Longford) of Knock Abbey, county Louth, a branch of the ancient House of O'Reilly, Prince of East Breffny. He was a captain in the British Army when, on the invitation of Pius IX., he took charge of the Irish Brigade in the service of the Pope, the "Battalion of St. Patrick," as it was called, part of the Papal Army raised in 1860 for the defence of the Pope's Dominions against the Piedmontese; and, as the General in Command, Lamoriciere, testified in his official reports, defended themselves with "great gallantry" at Perugia, at Spoleto and at Castelfidardo.* O'Reilly and O'Clery fought against a revolution. They

*Keyes O'Clery, "The Making of Italy," pp. 193–5.

had as a colleague in the Home Rule Party a soldier of quite a different sort—a soldier of the Irish revolution. One of the members for county Limerick, William Henry O'Sullivan, a tenant-farmer and hotel-keeper at Kilmallock, had been a Fenian, and was arrested for taking part in the attack on the police-barrack of his native town, during the insurrection. The only other farmer —though one on a large scale—was George Harley Kirk (county Louth).

Among the professional men were John Brady (county Leitrim) and William H. O'Leary (Drogheda), eminent surgeons; Charles J. Fay (county Cavan); Nicholas Dan Murphy (Cork city); and McCarthy Downing (county Cork), solicitors; Edmund J. Synan (county Limerick); Charles Henry Meldon (county Kildare); Richard O'Shaughnessy (Limerick city) and David Sherlock (King's county), lawyers. The father of Sir Colman O'Loghlen (county Clare) was the first Catholic law officer of the Crown, and the first Catholic judge, appointed in Ireland since the reign of James II. He was Attorney-General for Ireland in the Melbourne Government in the early 'Thirties. Sir Colman O'Loghlen himself was Judge Advocate General in Gladstone's Government, and had charge of the Bill which removed one of the last relics of the Penal Laws—the disability of Catholics to fill the post of Lord Chancellor of Ireland. Philip Callan (Dundalk) was professionally also a barrister-at-law; but in his manner of speaking and its matter there was

very little of the lawyer and much of the captain leading his company into battle. Sir Joseph Neale McKenna (Youghal), like William Shaw, was a financier. Commerce had only one representative, Maurice Brooks (Dublin city), who was in a large way of business as an ironmonger in Dublin, and was Lord Mayor the year of his election to Parliament.

No Irish Party has ever been without its eccentrics, or men of strong individuality of character. The Party of 1874 had at least three. Biggar might so be classed. But besides him, there were two of the traditional Irish type—which Biggar was not—hot-tempered and blustering in disposition, and, in style of speaking, florid and effusive, with a natural disposition to mix metaphors deliciously. Sir Patrick O'Brien (King's county) was the son of a Dublin publican, afterwards a wholesale spirit merchant, who had been twice Lord Mayor of Dublin, and on one of the occasions was specially selected so that he might receive Queen Victoria on her visit to Ireland in 1849, when her Majesty gave him a baronetcy, and the people, the title of "The Knight of the Battered Noggin." Sir Patrick himself was an old member of Parliament and a Whig. On hearing the Royal Assent given to the Church Disestablishment Act, he exclaimed: "Thank God, the bridge is at last broken down that has so long separated the English and the Irish people." A different kind of humorist, and one more racy of the soil, was Major Purcell

O'Gorman (Waterford city), physically the most gigantic member ever seen in the House of Commons—so great was his circumference that two men would have scarcely surrounded him with their arms—loud-voiced in proportion, and a most exquisite droll, who kept the House in roars of laughter. He was an old army officer. In the second battalion of the Connaught Rangers, he was a typical commander of "The Devil's Own" —wild, reckless and undisciplined, but as General Picton said of them in the Peninsular War, "brave and gallant soldiers in action"—and served with distinction in the Crimea War.

There were four scions of aristocratic families. One was a Catholic, Charles French (county Roscommon) son of Lord de Freyne. The others were Protestants. Two, Wilfred O'Callaghan, son of Lord Lismore; and Charles William White, son of Lord Annally, and a captain in the Scots Guards, sat for county Tipperary, which, on account of the uncompromising ardour of its nationalism, was regarded as "the green riband" of the Irish representation. The third was Lord Francis Conyngham (Clare), second son of the Marquis of Conyngham, a naval officer, just left the service, tall, dark and handsome, the ideal of the wild frieze-coated peasantry of his remote constituency. But the class best represented in number, was the old Catholic Whig landowners. They included, to mention a few, Denis M. O'Conor (county Sligo), brother of the O'Conor Don; George Leopold Bryan (county Kilkenny),

of Jenkinstown, Kilkenny; Edmund Dease (Queen's county) of Rath House, Queen's county; Arthur Moore (Clonmel) of Mooresfort, Tipperary; Edward Sheil (Athlone), son of Sir Justin Sheil and a nephew of Richard Lalor Sheil, the famous parliamentary orator of the O'Connell era. A member of this group afterwards attained to some celebrity as an envoy of the British Government at Rome to influence the Vatican against the Parnellite movement. This was George Errington (county Longford) the son of a Yorkshireman who settled in Ireland and married into the old Catholic family of the O'Ferralls of Ballyna, county Kildare.

This, the first Home Rule Party, had three Englishmen among its members. Mitchell Henry (county Galway) was the son of a wealthy Manchester cotton-spinner of Irish descent. A surgeon in London, he retired from the medical profession on the death of his father, when he became a partner in the cotton firm, and being very rich built a magnificent residence, Kylemore Castle, amid the mountains and lakes of Galway. He was a very earnest Home Ruler, and distinguished himself in the parliamentary debates. Mitchell Henry was a Protestant. The other two English members of the Party were converts to Catholicity. Both were notable men. Sir George Bowyer (county Wexford) belonged to an old English family, and was well-known as a jurist and writer of legal text books. He became a Catholic in

1850. In his day he was one of the most conspicuous lay defenders of the Church.

The third Englishman, Lord Robert Montagu (Westmeath), was still more remarkable. He was the second son of the Duke of Manchester, and was famous as a religious controversialist as well as a politician. In 1859 he was returned as a Conservative for Huntingdonshire. On the reconstruction of the Derby Ministry in 1867 he was appointed Education Minister. In 1870 he became a Catholic, and it was intimated to him that he would, in consequence, be dismissed by Huntingdonshire at the next General Election. Isaac Butt, addressing his constituents at Limerick, in October, 1872, said he was authorised by Montagu to say that in 1867—the year of the Fenian insurrection—he became so convinced of the impossibility of governing Ireland through the Imperial Parliament, that he drew up a Bill to give the country self-government on the basis of a Federal Union with England, and submitted it to the Cabinet. Butt went on to enlarge upon the sacrifices Montagu had to endure on account of his change of religion, and added—"I venture to suggest that any Irish constituency would do itself honour, and would shield liberty of conscience by inviting such a man as a Home Ruler, to be their representative."† It was quite in the nationalist tradition to invite an able Englishman, and a supporter of the cause, who could not find a seat in England, to enter Parliament as an Irish repre-

†"Freeman's Journal," October 4, 1872

sentative. Joseph Hume, Radical and economist, and a Repealer, also, was returned for Kilkenny borough, 1837 — 1841, on the nomination of O'Connell. Again, Frederick Lucas, originally a member of the Society of Friends who became a Catholic, started *The Tablet* in London in 1840, and transferred it, ten years later, to Dublin; was elected as a supporter of tenant-right for county Meath in 1852. Accordingly, Lord Robert Montagu was asked by the people and priests of Westmeath to stand for the county in 1874 with P. J. Smyth. What a curious pair of companions-in-arms—an aristocratic English Tory, and an Irish rebel! Montagu, as a writer and as a parliamentarian, was an able defender of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER IV.

"THAT GRAND CONJUNCTION, ISAAC BUTT."

The Home Rule Party embraced a wide variety of character, serious and whimsical, and the most remarkable man of them all was its leader. Had Isaac Butt been a lawyer of the common type, had he guided his conduct solely by calculations of self-interest, and joined one or other of the two British Parties—he had tendencies which inclined to either—with his legal knowledge and ability, his eloquence, his grasp of political questions, he might well have hoped to attain to high distinction and fortune—first as Attorney-General for Ireland, and next as Lord Chancellor, or Lord Chief Justice. But his career, both as lawyer and politician, was strangely erratic. He did not seem to care for wealth or honours. That unremitting attention to his profession without which there can be no great financial success at the Bar, he never gave. He had the ambition, at one time, of being a man of letters, and such were his intellectual attainments, that, had he the application, he would have become a great one. He wrote a novel. He was always ready to contribute articles to the Dublin magazines and weekly newspapers. He would accept no payment for them. How

could he? Were they not intended to help the cause? And the cause was Tory first, and Nationalist afterwards.

The vicissitudes of his political career were, indeed, very strange. In the year 1843, O'Connell and Butt were both Aldermen of the Dublin Corporation. O'Connell moved that a petition be presented to Parliament for the Repeal of the Union. Butt was chosen to lead the opposition, being the ablest and most zealous living champion of the Tory cause, and he made a speech just as grandly eloquent and argumentative as O'Connell's. After a debate that lasted three days, the motion was carried by 41 votes to 15—a majority of 26.*

In the autumn of the following year, when O'Connell showed a disposition to drop Repeal in favour of Federalism, Sir Robert Peel—the Prime Minister—with a view to turning this unexpected development to good account for the Government, wrote to Haytesbury, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, urging him to get an able Irish writer to expose the weakness of O'Connell's position. "Will neither love nor money stimulate an active partisan to engage in a good cause?" he asked. The writer was found. A powerful series of articles attacking Federalism appeared anonymously in the *Morning Herald* (London) and were copied widely into the Irish papers. They formed the most destructive criticism which the Federal solution of Irish self-government has ever

*Michael MacDonagh, "The Life of O'Connell," p. 301.

sustained. And, of all persons in the world, the writer was Isaac Butt.†

It must not be supposed that Butt, the politician, was of so pliable a nature that he was able and ready to adapt himself to any cause at the call of circumstances, and for his own personal ends. He was truly the soul of honour and the most unselfish of men. O'Connell, struck by the independence of opinion and love of Ireland, which marked the speech of Butt against Repeal, in the debate of the Dublin Corporation, remarked—"Depend upon it, that young man will be a Repealer." Butt was a Conservative by instinct and a Liberal by experience. He was in the true succession of the school of Irish statesmanship which flourished just a century before. He had in a large degree the intellectual qualities of Edmund Burke and Henry Grattan—the profound understanding of the one, and the other's brilliancy of speech; and rivalled both in his sincere concern for Ireland. His decisive turn to Nationalism came—as he declared at the Home Rule Conference—when, in defending the Fenian prisoners, he was made aware of the extent and resources of the conspiracy, the passionate devotion behind it, the earnestness of its leaders, their forgetfulness of self, their willingness to endure penal servitude, or death itself, for the cause of "Ireland a Nation." Then a thought flashed across his mind, to remain a purpose, clear, fixed and determinate—that of teach-

†MacDonagh, "The Life of O'Connell," p. 357.

ing the people to look to the safer and surer way of constitutionalism for their liberation.

Butt was a unique personality. No one like him has appeared, either before his time, or since, in Irish politics. Were he depicted in fiction, the character would be regarded as an exaggeration. Yet not even the imagination and humour of Charles Lever, the best of Irish novelists at the pourtrayal of eccentric character, would have been equal to the presentation of such a personality in fiction as Butt was in real life. During his canvass for the representation of Limerick in September, 1871, Butt suddenly disappeared. Bailiffs attempted publicly to arrest him in the street on a judgment for a debt of £2,000. Happily, Butt had a bodyguard of friends, and they hustled the minions of the law while the candidate sought shelter in a house, whence, by back ways and devious journeys, he succeeded in crossing to England. When the reason for his flight became known, the Government were accused of having instigated it for the purpose of securing the seat for one of their Irish law officers, or, at all events, of preventing the election of Butt.

It was not really necessary to have advanced this explanation of the episode. Butt was returned unopposed in his absence. Had there been a contest, the fact that he was unable to pay his debts, would not have lost him a single vote. Was it not many a good man's case? Moreover, there was a characteristically national flavour about the incident. It was quite in the tradi-

tional Irish manner—like a page from one of Lever's novels, indeed—for an Irish gentleman to be dunned by creditors, and, at a critical moment of his career, to have to fly from the bailiff. So the country was amused, and thought not the less of Butt. The public would have deemed it an honour to be allowed to pay Butt's debts. Had he not defended the Fenians for nothing—giving to the duty the greater part of three years, sacrificing thereby many lucrative engagements? Butt, however, would not hear of such a thing. He preferred to go to the moneylenders again. The country laughed once more when it read the address of thanks to the electors of Limerick which Butt issued from his retreat in London, and his excuse for his absence. He said he accepted the election not as a personal favour, but as confiding to him a solemn national trust, and he earnestly hoped and prayed that he might be able to prove himself worthy of it. He went on to ask the indulgence of the electors for his delay in visiting them. He said he would have been with them long ago only that he was reluctantly compelled under medical advice to seek an interval of rest before engaging in scenes of exertion and excitement.

No doubt, a man of the type of Butt would have been impossible as a political leader in the England of the 'Seventies, with its straight-laced Victorian sense of the proprieties. Ireland was far less artificial, and far more natural, and also more tolerant of human frailties. And recognis-

ing the supreme worth of Butt, it was as indulgent of his weaknesses and irregularities as England had been a century before of those of Charles James Fox, who, though he was a gambler and a drunkard, was none the less a grand man.

Nor was Butt himself in the least distressed or embarrassed by his financial straits. It was his chronic state. There was, however, nothing mean or shabby in his impecuniosity. He had a large income from the Bar—in a good year when he showed application and industry he would earn as much as £5,000—but, like the large rent rolls of so many Irish landlords, it was heavily mortgaged. And for much the same reasons—hospitality, conviviality, and a free and lavish way in general spending. Butt was a true representative of the old type of Irish gentleman who regarded money as a thing to be spent on oneself and others—open-hearted and open-handed—and thrift as a mean and discreditable habit. In the case of Butt there was a further explanation of his lack of pence which was of the most self-sacrificing kind. Instead of employing his great gifts as a lawyer and advocate in amassing a fortune, he devoted them unselfishly to the service of his country, both when he was a Tory and when he was a Nationalist.

With his keen, subtle intellect he combined quite a childlike simplicity. He was certainly like a child in the matter of money. Not in regard to having little of it, but as to the care of it and its value. Often when he got a cheque from a solicitor for a large sum he would tear it up,

because, as he would say, he could not find it in his heart to charge his old friend, the client, for the little service he had been privileged to render him; and afterwards he would borrow a five-pound note from the first acquaintance he met with in the street. Richard Adams, who was County Court Judge of Limerick, used to tell of an incident that happened when, as a young barrister, he was with Butt at the hearing of an election petition at Youghal. At the close of the trial Butt was given a cheque running to some hundreds of pounds, which he cashed at one of the local banks. In the morning he could find no trace of the money. He was staying at a friend's house, and just as the host was about to send for the police to investigate what he concluded must be a theft, the missing bank-notes were discovered. The night had been stormy, and to keep his bedroom window from rattling in its loose frame, Butt made a wad of the bank-notes, stuffed them between the window and the frame, and forgot all about them by morning.

Being absent-minded and indifferent in regard to money, it follows that Butt was the most careless of business men. He kept no accounts, and never, at any moment, knew his exact financial position. He had been a widower for years and lived with an only son, Robert, and two daughters in a big house in Eccles Street on the north side of Dublin. A lad named James Collins, whom he had educated, repaid him with the most devoted service as valet and clerk. "Often when return-

ing from court and when poor people were standing at his door-step looking for charity, he would," says Collins, enlarging on the way Butt's generosity was imposed upon, "borrow sixpences and shillings from me to give them, and if I hadn't the money he sometimes sent me with his clothes to the pawn-office in order to relieve the distress of others."‡ Another of Butt's foibles was that, like his equally brilliant fellow-countryman, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, he was fond of wine. He shone best in social circles, and for his wit and humour, his range of conversation, serious or light, the geniality of his manner, and his lovable nature, he was greatly in demand at dinner parties in Dublin and London. Over an extra bottle of port after dinner he was at his best, being then wisest and wittiest and most hopeful of his cause. James Collins relates that once when Butt had arranged to give a dinner, to which Lord Randolph Churchill was invited (his father the Duke of Marlborough was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), Butt was uneasy lest his cook—a good one but unreliable—should get drunk. On the day before the dinner Butt sent for a priest to induce her to take the pledge, were it only for a couple of days. The cook, summoned from the kitchen to the parlour, was very indignant on hearing the object of the priest's visit. Why should she, the soberest of women, be asked to take the pledge? "Then, have I come for nothing?" said the priest,

‡James Collins, "Life in Old Dublin" (1913), p. 184. Collins was afterwards an official of the Dublin Corporation, and well-known as a collector of rare Irish books and manuscripts.

pleading with her. "Oh no, your reverence," cried the cook, "give the pledge to the master."

Butt's frailties, linked with his genius and eloquence, and his supreme good-nature, only endeared him the more to the people. And he was respected and honoured, as well as beloved. The jarveys of Dublin, who drove Butt to and from the Four Courts, well knew that it depended upon the uncertain state of his purse whether they were paid a sovereign, or a shilling, or nothing at all. Most likely it would be—"I'll settle with you next time, my good man"; and the jarvey would answer—"Don't trouble about it, Mr. Butt. Sure 'tis honoured I am in having you on me car."

It accordingly befell that Butt was rarely out of the hands of the money-lenders. On the whole, they were not very hard on him, despite the difficulty of getting their loans and interest repaid. He had an ingratiating way with him that no man—not even a London money-lender—could withstand. As we say in Ireland, "He'd coax the very birds off the bushes." I have been told that usurers, who vowed never to trust him again with a brass farthing, melted under his appeal, and gave him the best of good wishes with rolls of Bank of England notes.

But one there was, without any bowels of compassion, and more than usually hard-hearted, who had him arrested on a judgment summons, shortly after his defence of the Fenian prisoners, when, having declined several lucrative engagements at the Bar, he was particularly short of money. He

was lodged in the debtor's side of Kilmainham Jail, and there spent close on two years.§ Kilmainham has many associations with the Irish Nationalist Movement. They are mainly tragic,—the hangings and shootings of revolutionary leaders,—but not all. For it was during his internment as a debtor in Kilmainham that Butt thought out his scheme for obtaining self-government for Ireland on the basis of Federalism, and by means of a union, on a national basis, of all classes, creeds, and interests in Ireland, and determined to give his abilities and time almost exclusively to its promotion. Through an arrangement come to with his creditors that they should get the greater part of his fees, as they were paid by his clients, he was released towards the close of 1869.

The Irish Nationalist Movement has had several leaders with curiously un-Irish names, of non-Irish descent, both in its revolutionary and constitutional phases. Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, Thomas Davis, John Mitchel, Charles Stewart Parnell; Roger Casement, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Griffith, Edmund de Valera—so the list runs. Surely the most unIrish name of all is "Isaac Butt," at least since "Napper Tandy," the United Irishman of '98, who, by a strange chance, is enshrined in the most famous of Rebel ballads, "The Wearin' of the Green." The case of Butt, however, is a remarkable instance of the error of supposing that a man's name always gives a clue

§James Collins, "Life in Old Dublin," pp. 131—2.

to his origin or nationality. Butt was Irish of the Irish. Butt had all the qualities, good and bad, which are supposed to be characteristic of the Irish race. O'Connell was the most representative Irishman that has ever lived, at least in modern times—thoroughly Gaelic on a pronounced and gigantic scale. O'Connell was the very incarnation of Ireland—its humour, light-heartedness, religiousness; good nature, gloom, waywardness, imagination, poetry, superstition—all its fine attributes and its amiable failings. Next to O'Connell, among Irish public men, came Butt in raciness of the soil. His eloquence flashed with Celtic fire. He was a believer in omens, like the peasantry, and shared all their ancient fancies as to ill luck and good luck. Though not a Catholic by baptism, he was sufficiently one in spirit to adopt a number of Catholic practices. He had Masses said for divine assistance in his advocacy in important law suits. So deep was his reverence for the Blessed Virgin that he had candles lit before her statue in Dublin churches, and his favourite reading at night, before going to bed, was that devotional work, *The Glories of Mary.*

Butt, in fact, despite his name, was descended from the O'Donnells, the chieftains of Tyrone, associated with the most desperate uprisings against English domination in Ireland; and was a striking instance of reversion to a remote ancestral type, modified, to some extent, by his particular upbringing. "That grand conjunction, Isaac Butt," as he was happily styled by a

contemporary Fenian poet—himself an O'Donnell, John Francis—was a dual personality. He was " Black Rory" of the Elizabethan age, wild and untamable, in the keeping of an astute constitutional lawyer of the nineteenth century.

Chapter V.

HOME RULE IN PARLIAMENT.

The Home Rule members, before proceeding to London for the opening of the new Parliament, met in the council chamber of the City Hall, Dublin, to deliberate on the policy they should pursue. They decided to form a separate and distinct Party, independent in Irish affairs of both Conservatives and Liberals, and with Whips of their own. This meant that they were to act unitedly on Home Rule, and on any other Irish question in regard to which they came to an agreement at a meeting of the Party. But upon all other matters they were to be free to speak and vote according to their individual judgment or opinions, Liberal and Conservative. The party tie was thus to be rather loose. The fundamental compact of the Party they declared to be this:—

> That, deeply impressed with the importance of unity of action of the Home Rule Party to the interests of the Home Rule cause, we engage to each other, and to the country, to obtain that by taking counsel together, by making all reasonable concessions to the opinions of each other, by avoiding, as far as possible, isolated action, and by sustaining and supporting each other in the course which

> may be deemed best calculated to promote the grand object of National Self-Government which the Irish Nation has committed to our care.

At the General Election the Conservatives were returned to power. Gladstone was out of office. He was the first English statesman, since the Union in 1801, to realise that the condition of Ireland was a shame and a humiliation to England. He had made a really great effort to use the Imperial Parliament as an instrument for the redress of the most pressing of Irish grievances. In 1869 he disestablished and disendowed the Protestant Church in Ireland, and in 1870—while the foundations of the Home Rule Movement were being laid—he carried a Land Act which, by giving the tenant farmer compensation for his improvements, recognised the principle of dual-ownership in the soil that was ultimately to pull down landlordism and put peasant proprietary in its place. Disraeli had achieved his high ambition. He was Prime Minister of England, supported by 360 Conservatives. The Liberals were 240, all told. Such was the state of affairs when the Home Rulers set out for Westminster. The general expectation in Ireland was that the appearance in Parliament of sixty adherents to Home Rule must lead to a glorious and speedy realisation of the national ideal. So slight was the notice which the movement had attracted in the English newspapers, that the advent of an Irish Parlia-

mentary Party caused, on that account, all the more surprise and interest. The Party, however, impaired the dramatic effect of its sudden rise by the initial mistake of scattering its membership all over the House. The few Conservatives in the Party joined the Ministerialists to the right of the Speaker. The "old guard," a solid body of Liberals, sat above the gangway on the Opposition side. The new recruits, and such of the old members as were intensely Nationalist, took their places below the gangway, with Butt, thereby instituting what was long to be known as "the Irish quarter" of the House. In these circumstances evidence was at once afforded that the Irish Party, far from being bound conscript to a single cause, were of diverging political opinions. It is curious to find in Dod's *Parliamentary Companion* for 1874—a publication, still extant, to which members supply brief biographical details —that not only Butt, but such undoubted Nationalists as Biggar, O'Connor Power, A. M. Sullivan, Joseph Roynane, Major O'Gorman, Captain Nolan, Richard Power, John Martin, Keyes O'Clery and W. H. O'Sullivan, described themselves, in each case, as "A Liberal, in favour of the system called Home Rule for Ireland." The only Irish Member who gave himself the appellation of "Nationalist" was P. J. Smyth, and even he qualified himself as "a moderate Irish Nationalist." All these, in fact, were on the Liberal Party list, and received the Liberal "Whips," or summons to attend on occasions

when there was a straight issue between Opposition and Government.*

Among the Irish members, outside the Home Rule Party, were two very distinguished and interesting personalities. One of them was "The O'Donoghue of the Glens," who sat for Tralee. He bore his striking Irish title as a descendant in a direct line of the Chieftains of Kerry. He was a Catholic and a landowner. Through most of the decade of the 'Sixties, when the masses in Ireland were animated with the revolutionary spirit, he, though a Member of Parliament, was so extreme in his views that the Fenians, or most of them, regarded him as their rising hope, and, probably their leader, when they took to the field. He had an attractive presence, tall, well-built and handsome, and as an orator he had a spell which enabled him to sway a public meeting far more even than Butt. A blood relation of O'Connell, he was known as "The Young Liberator." He was, in fact, the most sentimental and romantic figure that has ever appeared in Irish public life.

Suddenly, The O'Donoghue fell away. When Butt started the Home Rule movement he came out against it. He recanted in middle age the ardent nationalism of his youth and early manhood. Of course he was violently denounced. It was insinuated that his desertion was due to financial troubles; that in return for his support of the Liberal Government he got relief by grants from the secret funds dispensed by the Whips; or

*"Memoirs of Sir Charles Dilke, M.P." (1917), Vol. 1, p. 223.

else that he had become a social favourite in London, and, as such, had his integrity sapped by the seductive influences of the dining-rooms and drawing-rooms of the enemy. The O'Donoghue's own explanation was simply that he had changed his mind. In a public letter addressed in 1871 to John Francis Maguire, editor of the *Cork Examiner*, he contended that all the grievances which afflicted Ireland when O'Connell was demanding the Repeal of the Union had been redressed; that he had become convinced that Parliament could do, and would do, the fullest justice to Ireland, and he appealed to his countrymen to accept the Union and join hands with their British fellow-subjects—"a people," he added, "who have all the disposition and all the power to make their friendship invaluable." For any public man to shift his point of view in politics is really a trifling thing in human affairs. But in Ireland it used to be regarded by those who lost him as the unforgiveable sin, and by those who gained him as an instance of almost divine revelation.

The other personality was the leader of the Irish Conservatives. He, too, could boast of a long Gaelic descent:—Arthur MacMurrough Kavanagh, sprung, in a direct line, from the Kings of Leinster. He was to be seen on the top bench below the gangway, on the Government side,—a fine head with a handsome bearded face, and a trunk, but without arms or legs. Such was the indomitable character of the man, that though

thus physically handicapped from his birth, he made himself a bold rider to hounds, a good shot and a skilful angler. For attendance in Parliament, he went to London in his own yacht, which he had anchored in the Thames opposite the Palace of Westminster, and made it his residence during the session. Rowed in a boat from the yacht to the Parliament buildings, he was wheeled in a chair about the precincts, and carried into the House on the back of his servant. When a division was challenged his vote was counted by the tellers without his having to go through the lobby. He was a large landowner, living at Borris House, county Carlow, and represented that county in Parliament as a very resolute and able opponent of Home Rule.†

For a full-dress debate on Home Rule two nights were allotted—June 30, and July 2, 1874. Butt's motion asked for the appointment of a select committee of the House, representative of all Parties, to inquire into the nature and extent of the demand of the people of Ireland for self-government. A man of so profound a mind, and friendly, trustful, sanguine disposition, as Butt, could not but think that so great a thing as the conciliation of Ireland would be gladly purchased by England, for so small a thing, and so just and right and safe a thing, as a subordinate Parliament in Dublin for Irish affairs, a Parliament that would be in a much better position to satisfy the material wants of

†His son and heir, Walter MacMurrough Kavanagh, became a member of the Nationalist Party, under John Redmond, and sat for Co. Carlow.

Ireland than the Imperial Parliament, having regard to its greater knowledge of the local circumstances, and by doing so would, at the same time, relieve the over-weighted Imperial Parliament of the most harassing part of its burden. Butt, accordingly, was most hopeful that he was destined to be the agent appointed by Providence to bring to an end—after misunderstandings had been removed by discussion in the House, prolonged, it might be, for a year or two—that ancient national quarrel between Ireland whom he loved and England whom he admired, which was so disastrous to both.

The reply on behalf of the Government was made by John Thomas Ball, the Attorney-General for Ireland. Home Rule was, in reality, a proposal for the dismemberment of the Empire. It must be met, therefore, with a striking and irrevocable refusal by the House. So the answer ran. Lord Hartington, as Leader of the Opposition, gave expression to the views of the official Liberals. His chief point was that Home Rule, if granted, would be used as a step towards total separation. "If we have to cope with discontent now, we have to deal only with individuals," he said. "But what would be the position if we had to deal with an Irish Parliament having all the resources of Government at its command?" The loud and prolonged cheers which the question evoked from both sides of the House testified to the suspicion entertained by British members, Liberal and Con-

servative, that the Irish Nationalist Movement was, in its inmost heart, disloyal to England.

One of the most remarkable speeches of the debate was that of Captain White of the Scots' Guards, son of Lord Annally, and one of the two Protestant Home Rule Members for county Tipperary. Stories were being told that White had been subjected to insult as an "Irish rebel" at the mess table of his regiment. Confirmation of them was given by his remarks. It was, in fact, a valedictory speech. White resigned soon afterwards. He said:—

> He had lately been made painfully aware that the so-called freedom of opinion of a Member of Parliament—that much-vaunted privilege—in some cases might be practically a myth, and that however single-minded, upright and loyal a man might be, he must consent to choose whether he would be guided alone by the opinion of the social, or it might be the military, world in which he might happen to be, or rest satisfied with the consciousness that, according to his lights, he had endeavoured to do his duty, not only to his country but the nation at large.

White went on to say that he had been asked how it was that he, holding her Majesty's commission as an officer of the Army, could support Home Rule. To this he replied:—

> That motion was a loyal and constitutional request, loyally and constitutionally preferred; and it was a calumny to say that the separation or disintegration of the Empire was ever suggested or intended, either by its promoters or supporters. It was a proposition put forth by true friends of the Irish nation; and he held that it was not for the public weal that, being so put forward, it should be ignored or scouted.‡

The second night of the debate was marked by a personal encounter of a very novel kind, between The O'Donoghue and O'Connor Power. In the report of the first night's debate published by the *Freeman's Journal* there was a very eloquent speech in support of Home Rule, given in the first person, and extending to three columns, which was attributed to O'Connor Power, though he had not spoken at all. It was the result of one of those blunders from which even the best-regulated newspaper offices are not free, and over which, however annoying to those immediately concerned, the public never refrains from making merry. O'Connor Power had sent to the *Freeman* a manuscript copy of the speech he intended to contribute to the debate. The report of the parliamentary proceedings received by telegraph on the night of the debate mentioned that "Mr. Power supported the motion," and for this bald line the sub-editor of the *Freeman* substituted the glowing three

‡"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 220, pp. 757—9.

columns supplied by O'Connor Power. It was, however, Richard Power of Waterford who had spoken.

The O'Donoghue, when the debate was resumed, amused the House by referring to the incident in a jocose way, and read extracts from the speech so mysteriously imputed to the member for Mayo. Some of the passages were very striking. O'Connor Power argued that should England ever become involved in a European War, it was in the contentment of the Irish people—a race of soldiers—that her best security lay. He went on to say:—

> Though your ships of war have ploughed every sea, though your soldiers have planted the Flag of England on every spot of that wide dominion over which the sun never ceases to shine, you have yet to achieve the noblest victory of all—a victory over your own prejudices against the Irish race.

O'Connor Power rose when The O'Donoghue sat down. He was received with good-humoured cries of "spoke, spoke," and—a remarkable instance of his mental fertility and resource—proceeded to make a speech entirely different from the one he had written, but just as brilliant. Part of it was an unsparing attack on The O'Donoghue for his desertion. Speaking at a meeting held at the Rotunda, Dublin, in 1860, a time of great political excitement, The O'Donoghue, according to O'Connor Power, declared that the Nationalists might be imprisoned and their meetings sup-

pressed, but there was one thing English power could never suppress until the entire Irish race was banished—" that is the spirit of patriotism, and the longing for self-government which is the inevitable result of that patriotism." In order to suggest the reason why his adversary had recanted his extreme Nationalist opinions, O'Connor Power made a very happy quotation from another speech by The O'Donoghue in 1861. Not long before that, some Irish representatives, returned to Parliament in the popular interest, who had sworn before High Heaven, at public meetings, that they would never accept office or honours, or rewards of any kind, from the Government, had given way to temptation, and broken their oaths; and The O'Donoghue, in the passages read by O'Connor Power, drew a graphic picture, powerfully yet lightly touched, of the downward course of these perjured patriots:—

> It is melancholy to observe how a patriot falls. There are few to remind him of his duty, and the power of the seducer is great. It is easy to perceive that there is an interior struggle going on, for he has the look of a man who is trying to make himself think he is doing right but cannot succeed, and who is ashamed of himself.
>
> How the Government Whips first act upon him, whether they begin by sending him in the morning neatly printed invitations to come down in the evening to support the Govern-

ment, which look confidential, or whether they begin by staring at him, I cannot tell. The first dangerous symptom is an evident anxiety on the part of the patriot to be alone in a corner with the Whips. If you happen to pass him he tries to assume an air of easy indifference, and utters a monosyllable in a loud voice.

An evening or two afterwards, when the Ministry can scarcely scrape together a majority, the patriot votes with them, and remarks to his friend, the Whip, that it was a close thing.

From bad he goes to worse, and taking courage to himself from the idea that nobody knows him in the great wilderness of London, he gets up early and slips down by a back way to the Treasury. All is over.§

Perhaps never in parliamentary history was a politician so painfully quoted against himself. By his interruptions of O'Connor Power, The O'Donoghue showed the annoyance into which he was thrown by these most embarrassing echoes from what he looked back upon, no doubt, as his unregenerate and foolish years.

Towards the end of the debate, Disraeli intervened. His speech is described by the newspapers of the time as the most animated and cleverest he had ever made. He declared that nothing appeared to him more extraordinary than

§ "Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 220, pp. 928, 938—40.

the determination of the Irish people to proclaim to the world that they were a subjugated people. "I have been always surprised," he said, "that a people gifted with so much genius, so much sentiment, such winning qualities, should be—I am sure they will pardon me saying it, my remark is an abstract, not a personal one—should be so deficient in self-respect." Then, raising his voice in simulated indignation, he cried out—"I deny that the Irish people are conquered. They are proud of it. I deny that they have any ground for that pride." This sally was received with roars of laughter. Ireland, he protested, had not been conquered any more than any other country. England had been subjugated quite as much, but never boasted of it. The Normans had conquered Ireland, but it was after they had conquered England. Cromwell conquered Ireland, but it was after he had conquered England. Then passing from the vein of pleasantry to a serious mood, Disraeli thus concluded, amid loud and prolonged cheers:—

> I am opposed to this motion because I think involved in it are the highest and dearest interests of our country. I am opposed to it for the sake of the Irish people as much as for the sake of the English and the Scottish.
>
> I am opposed to it because I wish to see at the important crisis of the world—that perhaps is nearer arriving than some of us suppose—a united people welded in one great Nation-

> ality; and because I feel that if we sanction this policy, if we do not cleanse the parliamentary bosom of this perilous stuff, we shall bring about the disintegration of the Kingdom and the destruction of the Empire.‖

Sir Colman O'Loghlen, one of the members for county Clare, made answer by reading quotations from a most remarkable speech which Disraeli made in the House, thirty years before. In a discussion on the State of Ireland in 1844, Disraeli described the "Irish question"—as it presented itself to him—as "a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien Church, and, in addition, the weakest Executive in the world." Disraeli went on to say in the same speech:—

> Well, then, what would hon. gentlemen say if they were reading of a country in that position? They would say at once, "the remedy is revolution." But the Irish could not have a revolution. And why? Because Ireland was connected with another and more powerful country. Then what was the consequence? The connection with England thus became the cause of the present state of Ireland. If the connection with England prevented a revolution, and a revolution were the only remedy, England logically was in the odious position of being the cause of all the misery in Ireland.§§

‖"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 220, pp. 951—63.

§§Disraeli's speech, containing these passages, will be found in the "Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 72, p. 1016.

A great demonstration against Home Rule in the division lobbies had been organised. The voting was: 61 for; 458 against—majority against, 397. But the Irish members voting gave a majority of 16 for Home Rule, the numbers being 53 for, and 37 against. Conservatives and Liberals both were hilarious after the division. Were not these funny Irishmen, and their absurd demand, effectively disposed of? What did they want with an Irish Parliament when they had the Imperial Parliament? There was never a thought of the trials and tribulations that were being stored up for future British statesmen. I notice in the division list the name of one who survived into the dark and troubled times that were to come—"Balfour, Arthur James."

CHAPTER VI.

THREE PARLIAMENTARY MUSKETEERS.

April 22, 1875, is a notable date in the annals both of Parliament and the Irish Nationalist Movement. For on that night in the House of Commons, Joseph Gilles Biggar, commenced what came to be known as "Obstruction"—talking against time to annoy and harass the Government by impeding the progress of their legislation—and the Irishman whose name is, historically, most closely associated with the policy, Charles Stewart Parnell, was sworn, signed the roll and took his seat as a new member.

The measure under discussion was called "The Peace Preservation (Ireland) Bill." It was introduced by Hicks-Beach, as Chief Secretary, and its object was to continue in force repressive Acts, which were about to lapse, against Fenianism and agrarian disturbances. The performance of Biggar was most audacious. He came into the House staggering under the weight of a mass of Blue-books from the Library. "Mr. Speaker," said he, at the opening of his speech, "in order to save time I have brought in at once all the authorities to which I propose to refer." Then he spoke for four long, weary hours. It was an astonishingly protracted speech for Biggar. He had

no fluency. What he had to say on any subject was usually colloquial in manner and common-place in matter, and was also soon said. He was more adept at embarrassing interjections into the speeches of others, especially Ministers, that aroused angry cries of "order." To help out his limited power of talk, on this occasion, he took to quoting from the Blue-books. His harsh voice, with something of a croak in it, grew weak and husky. The Speaker was irritated, naturally, but he was then powerless to call upon a member to resume his seat for irrelevancy or repetition. "The honourable member must address the Chair, and not talk to himself in that fashion," was all he could say by way of reproof. "Can't you hear me, Mr. Speaker?" Biggar asked in a tone of concern. "No, I cannot hear you," replied the Speaker. "Then I'll move up nearer to you, sir," said the irrepressible Obstructionist, and, crossing the gangway with his armful of Blue-books, he took up a position close to the Chair. Then he resumed his reading of the evidence given before the Westmeath Commission—appointed to inquire into the deeds of an agrarian secret society in that county—and never stopped until he came to the imprint at the end of the Blue-book, which he also read—"London. Printed for her Majesty's Stationery Office, by Eyre and Spottiswoode, printers to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty."

Biggar was regarded by the House, generally, with curiosity and mingled amusement and aversion, as a queer and unaccountable creature

who, it was said, kept a small provision shop in Belfast, and when he was not attending Parliament, sold slices of bacon and pigs' feet for a living. Disraeli sat on the Treasury Bench self-absorbed and unobservant, as usual, with his arms folded, his head stooped on his breast, his tall hat pulled down over his glazed eyes and parchment face. But he was startled out of himself by the extraordinary antics of this little humpbacked man, with the broad grinning smile, and the croaking voice. Exclaiming "what's that!" the Prime Minister gazed at Biggar curiously through his eye-glass for a minute or two. Then turning to his neighbour on the Treasury Bench, David Plunket, member for Dublin University, and Solicitor-General for Ireland, he said, "Is this what you call a leprecaun in your country?—one of those unearthly beings that come out in the moonlight to dance with the fairies."

Parnell sat below the gangway with the other Irish members during this extraordinary scene—his first experience of the House of Commons—deeply interested but too seriously minded to be amused only by it. Under thirty years of age, an Episcopalian in religion, and a bachelor, he was tall and slender of frame, with regular handsome features and wore a beard. The complexion was waxen in its pallor, the eyes dark-brown, the hair of a light chestnut tinge and the expression of the face was self-centred, yet alert and searching in response to any demand upon his attention. He had been elected for Meath, in room of John Martin, the '48 man, who was dead. The Irish

revolutionary of the hillside was followed by the Irish revolutionary of the parliamentary arena.

But those who knew Parnell best had no idea that he was possessed of qualities calculated to win distinction of any kind in the House of Commons, much less to turn the Assembly upside down. At his election meetings he was a hesitating speaker, as if his ideas, even on the vast and varied subject of Ireland and her grievances, were few, and the words at his command inadequate to give them ready expression. He was also shy and diffident in intercourse. Yet a notable accession to the Home Rulers was Parnell, the young country squire of Avondale, in Wicklow, if only on account of the history and social position of the family.*

Parnell's mother was an American woman—Delia Tudor Stewart, daughter of a Commodore in the United States Navy—and had advanced nationalist sympathies. She harboured in her Dublin town house, Temple Street, fugitive Fenians for whose arrest warrants were out in 1867. "Charles," his sister Emily says, "evinced no sympathy with the Fenians, and was vexed with his mother for taking the active part which she did, and for mixing herself up so much with their affairs."† At this time Parnell was more concerned about cricket than about politics. He was

*Thomas Sherlock, "Life of Parnell" (1880). Sherlock was editor of the Nationalist "Weekly News," Dublin, for several years. His biography of Parnell, the first that was published, contains much interesting information of the early life of Parnell, supplied by his mother.

†Emily Munroe Dickinson, "A Patriot's Mistake"—personal recollections of the Parnell family (1906).

captain of the Wicklow XI. He was also a subaltern in the Wicklow Militia. The police searched the house in Temple-street, but the only supposed trace of the Fenians that they found were Parnell's uniform and sword, which they carried off, thinking the dark green of the Wicklow Rifles must be the fighting garb of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Charles, according to his elder brother, John, was greatly annoyed. He liked to attend the Viceregal levees and balls at Dublin Castle in military uniform, court-dress being, in his opinion, too much like a footman's livery. But, more than that, he resented the idea of being mistaken for a Fenian, as he was in the Queen's Army, and was very proud of the fact; and he told his mother that he would leave the house if she continued to show such active interest in the disloyal and rebellious.‡ He had not drunk at that well-spring of disaffection—his country's history. Of the past of Ireland he was very ignorant.

Parnell was, in fact, disposed to be Conservative in political opinion. What were the influences, then, that so fatefully changed the career of Parnell from its original purpose?—that induced him to forsake the quiet, uneventful life of a country gentleman, and plunge into the stormy arena of Irish politics, the most nationalist of Nationalists. It was the Home Rule Conference of 1873 that first turned his attention to the cause. He joined the League in 1874. He was then

‡John Howard Parnell, "Charles Stewart Parnell, A Memoir" (1916), p. 72.

High Sheriff of county Wicklow, a mark not only of high social distinction, but of pronounced Conservative tendencies. From the moment he decided to enter public life a very powerful influence propelled him irresistibly to the Nationalist side. This was the influence of heredity—the tradition of his family. Antagonism to England was a characteristic of Parnell's immediate ancestors, both Irish and American. Was he not the great grandson of Sir John Parnell of the old Irish Parliament, who rejected the bribe of a peerage to support the Union, and by his uncompromising resistance to that measure sacrificed his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer? And was he not descended, on his mother's side, from the American Stewarts, who had fought against England in the War of Independence and helped to found the United States? The honeymoon of Commodore Stewart (Parnell's grandfather) was interrupted by a summons to take the seas against England in the Naval War, 1812—15. As he bade farewell to his bride he asked her, "What present shall I bring you when I come back?" "Bring me a British frigate," was the reply. He captured two. These were the examples that Parnell set before him. One of his traits was intense family pride. He would encounter the English in their legislative assembly; and endeavour to bring spoils to the Irish people from over St. George's Channel, particularly that great prize of which they had been deprived—the old Irish Parliament.

The maiden speech of a new member, who is

destined to become a great parliamentarian, has a peculiar interest. Parnell made his first speech four days after he took his seat. That was April 26, 1875; and the subject was the Peace Preservation Bill which Biggar was obstructing with such remarkable pertinacity and resource. He asked, "Why should Ireland be treated as a geographical fragment of England?" as he had heard her described. "Ireland is not a geographical fragment, but a nation," he declared. His mood was quite tranquil and reasonable. He asked the House to regard Ireland as "anxious to defend England when her hour of trial came," and he trusted the day would come when England would see that her strength lay "in a truly independent, because truly self-supporting Irish nation."‖ In *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, Parnell confined himself to the use of the stereotyped phrase of his colleagues—"Is in favour of the system called Home Rule for Ireland," and said nothing as to whether he was Liberal or Conservative in general political questions.

Having made his maiden speech, Parnell was content to be "a silent member" during the Sessions of 1875 and 1876. He was regular in his attendance, and voted in all divisions taken on Bills or motions relating to Ireland, but he did not intervene in the debates.

Biggar continued to act the part of "an imp of mischief." So far as the House of Commons was concerned, he had no sense of reverence or even

‖"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 223, p. 1645

of respect. On April 27, 1875—only five nights after his exploit in inflicting upon the House the full contents of a big Blue-book—notoriously the dreariest of publications—he again upset everyone's temper and shocked the country, besides, by what is regarded as the crowning prank of his parliamentary career. That was the turning of the Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward) out of the House. The Chamber was crowded in every part to hear a debate on a motion put down by Henry Chaplin, a country squire, deploring the export of the best stud horses and brood mares. Sitting conspicuously over the clock in the crowded Peers' Gallery was the Prince of Wales. Just as the Speaker was about to call on Chaplin, Biggar rose and said, "I espy strangers." This meant, in accordance with the then existing rules, that all the occupants of the different galleries must retire, so that the House might sit in secret session. The Speaker hesitated. He seemed to be struck aghast by Biggar's daring and impudence. The House gave inadequate vent in suppressed murmurs to what it took to be an insult to the heir to the Throne. "Do I understand," said the Speaker in deliberate and pained tones, "the hon. member to take notice of the presence of strangers in the House?" "I do, sir," was Biggar's unflinching reply. "That being so," said the Speaker, "I must ask strangers to withdraw." All the galleries were accordingly cleared, and the Prince of Wales had to go out as well as peers, reporters and the general public.

A scene of great excitement followed. According to reports of what happened, which appeared in the London newspapers next morning, and have been embodied in *Hansard*, Disraeli, amid tremendous cheering, moved the suspension of the rule for the exclusion of strangers so that those who had to leave might return again. "I think the course pursued by the hon. member," said the Prime Minister, "tends to the discredit of the House, and that if such proceedings are resorted to, the country will cease to believe that this House is what I believe it to be, notwithstanding there may be exceptions—an assembly of English gentlemen." Biggar explained that his object was to call attention to the unsatisfactory position the Press stood in relation to the House, inasmuch as it was in the power of a single member—as his own action showed—to exclude the reporters. Even so, he was denounced on all sides. "I think," said one of his colleagues, George Bryan, of county Kilkenny, "that a man should be a gentleman first and a patriot afterwards." At this there was a roar of cheers. But something more withering was still to come. "The hon. member for Cavan," said Henry Chaplin, a man who in himself embodied the tone of the House, "appears to forget that he is now admitted to the society of gentlemen." More loud cheers. It was evident that what was most exasperating to the fine gentlemen of the House was that the fellow was a pork butcher.‖‖ Biggar had only one de-

‖‖ "Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 223, pp. 1692–94.

fender, Joseph Roynane of Cork, who got up and said his hon. friend had been repudiated enough, and he for one would stand by him.§

Biggar continued to go on his way, and even out of his way, making things embarrassing for the Government. One of his favourite expedients was the challenging of divisions. For this form of consuming time, making members walk through the lobbies, it was necessary that he should have a coteller. He found an accomplice in Major Purcell O'Gorman, the enormous representative of the city of Waterford. Never has there been seen in real life a finer reproduction of Shakespeare's Falstaff —voluminous of girt, loud-voiced, and bearded. As the major lumbered up the floor with Biggar, after a division, so swelling was his indignation against the machinations of a wicked Government that he was positively dilated into a breadth beyond all naturalness. The contrast between the two tellers, physically and mentally, was most comical. Biggar's diminutiveness accentuated the sense of unsurpassed largeness that O'Gorman suggested. At the sight of this mountain of a man, with the cloudy and wrinkled brow, as if he were striving against some dire perplexity, and the little hunchback by his side, with his homely face expanded by a good-humoured grin, members roared with laughter. T. D. Sullivan has commemorated O'Gorman in a contemporary ballad—

§Biggar's action led to an alteration of the rule, whereby the exclusion of strangers was afterwards made dependent, not upon the whim of an individual member, but upon a vote of the whole House.

Of all the M.P.'s,
That Parliament sees,
From Session to Session, I'll wager,
Neither Saxon nor Scot
Can pretend they've got
A member to match our grand Major;
Our portly and ponderous Major,
Our mighty, magnificent Major,
The Councils of State
Have no man of such weight
Or such girth, as our bould Irish Major.

On a summer night in 1875, Dr. Kenealy moved for a Royal Commission to inquire into the trial and conviction of the "Claimant," whose right to the Tichborne estates he had so notoriously defended. The division was one of the most remarkable in parliamentary records. The numbers were: For, 1; against, 433. The solitary member who went into the "aye" lobby was Major O'Gorman. As the night was hot he went into that lobby, he explained, because he would have more air and room there. A humourist by intention, as well as unconsciously, when an English member once asked complainingly why it was that the representatives of Ireland were always exposing their country's sores, O'Gorman bellowed forth the happy retort—"Because we want to have them redressed." He was a universal favourite. English members liked to refer to him as their "honourable and gallant friend." In the course of one of his droll speeches, rambling and inconsequential, he said, "Whatever may be thought

of me or my conduct as an Irish member, it will, I think, be admitted that I have never bored the House"; and a shout of mingled cheers and laughter went up from all sides in endorsement of his claim.

The Irish Party, as a body, did not share in any degree Biggar's contempt for the decorums and solemnities of the House. Indeed, the opinion of the majority of them was that the stratagems and manœuvres of the member for Cavan were in the worst taste and merited the severest condemnation. At this time, the session of 1876, the Party were intent on preparing Irish Bills and laying them before the House. Butt had the idea that the Government, having rejected the demand for an Irish Parliament, would feel all the more bound to pass measures for the amelioration of Ireland's condition. A large number of Bills were, accordingly, introduced, dealing with the reform of education, land, franchise, poor law, county government, the encouragement of sea fishing and the reclamation of waste lands—all of them excellent measures and of pressing need; but not one even was passed.

Parnell's name will be found in the division lists, but very rarely among the speakers. It was his habit to sit in the members' gallery over the Government benches, whence he had a view of what was going on in the Irish quarter below the gangway on the Opposition side. On a night that one of the Irish Bills was under discussion he saw Butt—genial and fatherly old man—patting on the back the colleague in charge of it, by way of show-

ing his pleasure at the performance. But the Bill was rejected. Parnell met the member afterwards in the Lobby, and patting him on the back, in imitation of Butt, said banteringly, "You have been a very good boy; you did that very well, and you may now go home—and you won't hear any more about your Bill for another twelve months." Then, speaking in a more serious tone, he added: "Ah, it is not by smooth speeches that you will get anything done here. We want rougher work. We must show them that we mean business. They are a good deal too comfortable in that House; and the English are a good deal too comfortable everywhere."§§

At the opening of the session of 1877, Parnell joined Biggar and O'Gorman, and, taking command of this small, independent and irregular band, made its interference with Government business, hitherto somewhat haphazard and irrelevant, more methodical and according to plan. The leader afforded a still more striking contrast, physical and mental, with his followers—the impish hunchback and the ramping, roaring Major. "A slender and rather good-looking young Irishman, a little over thirty, with a determined cast of features and bearded as a pard," is a contemporary newspaper description of Parnell. His voice was cultured, almost devoid of accent, and had an icily penetrating tone. He was of a different type, not only from Biggar and O'Gorman, but from the common run of the Irish Party,

§§Barry O'Brien, "Life of Charles Stewart Parnell" (1898), Vol. 1, p. 99.

he was so authoritative in air and manner, as if he knew no superior in the House.

The power which a member then possessed, when the House was in committee on a Bill, to interrupt and delay proceedings, by moving, as often as he pleased, "to report progress" or "that the Chairman do leave the Chair"—both of which meant the adjournment of the Committee stage—continued to be employed by the three musketeers. On a night that the House was engaged in Committee on the Irish County Courts Bill, O'Gorman moved to report progress. In the division, Biggar was O'Gorman's co-teller. One solitary member voted in the "aye" lobby. It was Parnell. The "noes" were 147. O'Gorman next moved that the Chairman do leave the Chair. Again he had the assistance of Biggar in counting the votes. Parnell again had the "aye" lobby all to himself. For the motion, 1; against, 128. The announcement of the numbers after each of the divisions was received with shouts of ridicule.

But these were not the only tactics. Parnell took an unbounded interest in all the details of Government Bills, and, what is very curious, in this process of minute criticism, he changed from a stammering speaker into a fluent one with a concise and terse style. The two chief measures before the House at the time were the Prisons Bill, for the amendment and unification of the prison code, and the Mutiny Bill, for the maintenance of discipline in the Army and Navy. Parnell obstructed the progress of these Bills by endeavouring to improve them. He moved in-

numerable amendments to the Prison Bill with a view to making impossible the cruel treatment of prisoners; and to the Mutiny Bill, so as to abolish flogging in the Army and Navy.

One night Parnell made a joke, which though he was not given to pleasantries, was good and to the point. Ward Hunt, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who was in charge of the Mutiny Bill, was addicted to sleeping on the Treasury Bench. Parnell pointed out that among the offences for which flogging might be inflicted in the Navy was that of a sentry sleeping at his post of duty. "Now, sir," Parnell went on, "I should like to know if the right hon. gentleman regards that as a serious offence."

But though British members laughed at Biggar and O'Gorman, and with them, at times, they did neither in regard to Parnell. To him they had an instinctive antipathy. He was like themselves superficially—more so than any other Irish member—and yet they felt in their bones that he had really nothing in common with them. There was something inimical about him, which they could not well define. And how different were Biggar and O'Gorman from former representatives of Ireland! Hitherto, the part of Irish members in the House of Commons was like that of children in company—to be seen but not heard. It was regarded as a gross breach of parliamentary manners for an Irish member to interfere at all in British matters. Visitors to Ennistymon, Clare, may see a high column erected to the memory of Cornelius O'Brien, a member for the county. It was of him

that Lord Palmerston, Prime Minister, said—"He was the best representative Ireland ever sent to Westminster. For he was in the House thirty years, and never once opened his mouth." That kind of Irish member was gone, and for ever.

CHAPTER VII.

"OBSTRUCTION! OBSTRUCTION!"

Late on the night of April 12, 1877, Butt was in the smoking-room of the House of Commons, very comfortable in the enjoyment of a cigar after supper, and enthralling a group of members, English and Irish, by his brilliant conversation and humour. Suddenly Hicks-Beach, the Chief Secretary, and others burst in from the House, bringing word that Parnell was pushing obstruction to unbearable lengths, and urging that the least Butt should do was to go in and repudiate him. Butt, as an amiable and easy-going man, was at first reluctant to move, but so great was the pressure brought to bear upon him by members of the Government and Opposition—both united in repelling the attack of the Obstructionists upon the orderly progress of business—and also by the moderate section of his own Party, that he gave way.

It was then one o'clock in the morning, and the House was in committee on the Mutiny Bill. When Butt entered the Chamber, a motion to report progress, moved by Biggar and supported by Parnell, was being angrily wrangled over. He at once intervened. He regretted that the time of the House should be wasted in "this miserable and wretched discussion," as he called it. "A motion to report progress was obstruction, and

against that he must protest." He went on to say that he was not responsible for Parnell, and could not control him. "He, however, had a duty to discharge to the great nation of Ireland," he continued; "and he thought he could discharge it best when he said he disapproved entirely of the conduct of the hon. member for Meath."* There were loud and almost continuous cheers during Butt's protest.

The two words that best describe Butt's policy are "moderation and urbanity," the main characteristics of his own nature. He prided himself on knowing the English thoroughly—their love of ordered liberty, their ready response to justice, their passion for fair play, their friendliness to all who showed good-will towards their country, their inflexible resistance to attempts to put them down, to force upon them anything which they were not convinced was right. The wisest course, Butt was convinced, in dealing with such a people, was peaceful penetration. Bring home to them by argument and illustration Ireland's unhappy past, her wretched condition, her need of Home Rule, her desire to be on good terms with England, and in a few years all would be well—Ireland would be prosperous and happy under her native government, and England would be freed from the embarrassment of a decaying and discontented Ireland. Moreover, Butt was an intense admirer of Parliament. In his eyes she was majestical, and to try to win Home Rule by doing her wrong was as

*"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 233, pp. 1048—50.

repugnant to him as to try to win it by a bloody revolution.

Butt followed up his action in the House of Commons by addressing long letters to Biggar and Parnell. The nature of his personal relations with his two colleagues was shown in the different ways he addressed them. One was warmly "My dear Mr. Biggar"; the other was coldly "Dear Sir." The letters were really an appeal to the country. Writing to Parnell, under date April 21, '77, he said he was convinced that "aimless and objectless obstruction" must alienate their truest and their best English friends, and expose them to the taunt of being unfit even to administer the forms of representative government:—

"But if I urge these grounds of prudence, I am not insensible of that which is higher than all prudence—the duty of maintaining before the civilised world the dignity of the Irish nation and the Irish cause. That will only be done while we respect ourselves and our duty to the Assembly of which we are members; an Assembly to degrade which is to strike a blow at representative institutions all over the world—a blow that will recoil with terrible severity on the very claims we make for our own country, but which, whatever be its effects, would be unworthy of ourselves and of our cause."

Butt added that he could not fail to remember how often it had been the cruel fate of Ireland "to see her fairest hopes of success marred by dissen-

sions just as prosperity seemed to smile upon her cause," and went on to say:—

"I do not, I confess, fear that I myself am condemned to see that fabric which I raised in years of patient toil and sacrifices torn down in the meaningless dissensions of an hour. If the policy of dissension really become formidable, I know that there is in the Irish people enough of good sense and intelligence and patriotism effectually to crush it, and to that good sense and intelligence and patriotism, if the occasion unhappily arises, I will not hesitate confidently to appeal."

Parnell's reply is dated "Avondale, Rathdrum, May 24, 1877." It was written during the summer recess of Parliament. Addressing Butt as "Dear Sir," he was equally outspoken and much more hard and resolute. Here are a few significant passages from the letter:—

"I should have been only too pleased to follow your lead in anything had you led in anything but inactivity and absence from the House.

"I am denounced because I have not joined the majority in doing nothing, in inactivity and in absenteeism; because I have shown the country that they have a power which they little know of, to use, if they desire, for the enforcement of their just claims.

"I intended to do nothing more than to show that if two members can do so much, hampered as they must be in their choice of methods and weapons by the very fact of there being only two,

how vast and powerful might be the influence of a Party of sixty, not necessarily adopting one line of action, but at least attending to their duty, and disregarding the 'feeling of the House' when that feeling is wrong and opposed to the interests of Ireland."†

The two most influential members of the Irish Party, and the most intellectually able, after Butt, were A. M. Sullivan and O'Connor Power. Both of them were among the few acknowledged orators of the House—Sullivan, the slight black-bearded man, nervous and highly strung, gave vent to the passion and pathos of the Irish cause, in tremulous accents and with wavering gestures; and O'Connor Power, tall and strongly built, and determined-looking, with a voice of the utmost impressiveness in range and depth, expressed the grandeur and nobleness, and also the strength and menace, of that cause. Sullivan had come to the conclusion in 1876 that Butt's policy of conciliation had failed, and though greatly attached to Butt, personally, he urged in his newspaper, *The Nation*, that the leadership of the Party needed more vigour and watchfulness if it was to be at all fruitful. He gave some assistance to the active policy, and while he never completely identified himself with it, especially in its extreme interference with English and Imperial legislation, he declined to support Butt in condemning it. O'Connor Power, on the other hand, wholeheartedly adopted it and became one of the most formidable of the Obstructionists.

†The correspondence is given fully in the "Freeman's Journal" (Dublin), May 24, 26 and 28, 1877.

When Parliament reassembled after the summer recess, the extreme section of the Home Rulers received a very notable accession in Frank Hugh O'Donnell, who was returned for the borough of Dungarvan. He described himself in *Dod,* as "a Democrat and Irish Nationalist." The son of a Donegal man, a captain in the "Fighting Fifth" (Northumberland Fusiliers), he was born at Devonport in 1848, and was thus twenty-nine when elected. He had a distinguished academical career at Queen's College, Galway, and was a writer on foreign affairs for the *Morning Post,* London. The Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain had elected him vice-president—Butt being president—and he was hon. secretary of the organization, as well. In personal appearance, O'Donnell was tall, and had the well-knit frame of a trained athlete. He had black hair falling over a high forehead; rather beetling eye-brows, a full nose, a long moustache, carefully trained; and an arrogant voice, and a still more arrogant single eye-glass.

O'Donnell boasted in later years that it was he who had planned and put into practice the system of parliamentary obstruction.‡ There is abundance of evidence in the *Parliamentary Debates* and newspapers of the time, that, months before the advent of O'Donnell, and, indeed, months afterwards, Parnell had impressed the House and country as being, aided by Biggar, the chief disturber of order and decorum in the House of Commons. It was O'Donnell, however, who, a few

‡This is the main theme of his "History of the Irish Party," which he brought out in two volumes in 1910.

weeks after his appearance in the House, organised and led what, till that time, was the longest and most dramatic exhibition of obstruction. The South Africa Bill, which was under discussion, proposed to form a Confederation of the British Colonies, including the annexed Boer Republic, the Transvaal. Paul Kruger, the President of the Republic, and his Attorney-General, were in London on a mission of protest, and as the result of an arrangement come to with them, O'Donnell put down forty hostile amendments to the Bill.‡‡

On July 25, 1877, the committee stage of the Bill commenced. O'Donnell at once moved to report progress, on the ground that the Government had given no satisfactory reason for seizing the Transvaal. Parnell supported the motion. "I feel as an Irishman," he said, "coming from a country which has experienced to the fullest extent the result of English interference in its affairs, and the consequences of English cruelty and tyranny, that I have a special interest in thwarting and preventing the designs of the Government upon their unfortunate South African colonists." Sir Stafford Northcote, who was then Leader of the House—Disraeli having been made a peer, as Lord Beaconsfield—at once interposed and moved that Parnell's words be taken down by the clerk. This was done, and the Speaker was sent for, as is the custom when anything disorderly occurs in committee upon which the judgment of the House is invoked. Parnell declined to apologise. He was directed to leave the Chamber while his conduct

‡‡O'Donnell's "Irish Parliamentary Party," Vol. 1, p. 188.

was being debated—this also being in accordance with the rules—and being of opinion that no one had more interest than himself in the proceedings, he appeared in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery. After a long and lively discussion it was decided to postpone the matter for two days. Parnell thereupon returned to his place below the gangway—the House having again gone into committee—and, as he had not finished his speech at the time of Northcote's interruption, he resumed his remarks, coolly taking up the argument at the exact point at which he had left off, an hour previously, and, in fact, repeating the very expressions to which exception had been taken.‖

The intention to proceed further against Parnell was ultimately dropped, and on Tuesday, July 31, 1877, the committee stage of the South Africa Bill was resumed. The House met at four o'clock in the afternoon, and remained in committee until past six the next evening—the longest sitting (twenty-six-and-a-half hours), so far, in parliamentary annals. The minority in the divisions never rose above five. Thus, adding the tellers, only seven members took part in the obstruction. These were—Parnell, Biggar, O'Connor Power, O'Donnell, Captain Nolan, Harley Kirk, and Dwyer Gray, the latter being a new member of the Home Rule Party, and son of the late Sir John Gray, whom he succeeded as owner and editor of the *Freeman's Journal*. Major O'Gorman was prevented by illness from joining in the fray. The

‖"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 235, pp. 1809—34.

tactics of the Obstructionists were compendously put by Dwyer Gray, as follows:—

To work only in Government time.
To aid anybody to spend Government time.
Whenever you see a Bill, block it.
Whenever you see a Raw, rub it.

Parnell called them "Biggar's Four Gospels." It was one of the few jokes he was ever known to have indulged in.§

The two front benches, Government and Opposition, held a consultation, and decided to carry the Bill through committee in a single sitting, no matter how long the proceedings might be protracted. Accordingly a system of relays was arranged. Batches of members, drawn from the two Parties, relieved each other at intervals during the night. Four chairman presided in succession. Dinners, suppers, and abundance of refreshments were provided by the Whips. The Obstructionists protested that their sole object was to put a stop to the habit of hasty and reckless legislation into which the House had unhappily fallen. But Sir William Harcourt, leading the Liberal supporters of the Government, made, at two o'clock in the morning, an impassioned attack on the small minority of Irish members who, he declared, were out to wreck that most famous of all representative Assemblies, and proceeded to read an extract from a speech by Parnell, at a public meeting in Ireland, in which the true parliamentary policy of the Home Rule Party was defined as "a policy not of conciliation

§O'Donnell, "Irish Parliamentary Party," Vol. 1, p. 183.

but of retaliation." Cheers greeted the quotation, followed by a furious shout of anger when Parnell rose. The Chairman, however, would not hear him, as he had already spoken on the amendment before the committee. Then Frank Hugh O'Donnell defended, at great length, the policy of retaliation. What, he asked, was there wrong about it? The Government were only being paid back in their own coin. If the advanced Party in Ireland, for whom he spoke, could not have "conciliation," they would have "retaliation."

Butt made his appearance at that moment, and, rising in his place denounced the Obstructionists. Liberals and Conservatives united in giving him an enthusiastic ovation. He repudiated the claim of the Obstructionists to speak for Ireland. If they had that right, he would retire from public life. O'Donnell had no title to use on his lips the name of the Irish Party. "Sir," interposed O'Donnell, "what I said was, I speak for, not the Irish Party, but the most advanced, or, if you please, the most disaffected, portion of the Irish Party." "Hear, hear, hear," cried the Obstructionists. Butt went on to deny that those who acted contrary to the pledges given by the Irish Party were, or could be, members of that Party. The Party had, in fact, reprobated O'Donnell. The old man thus concluded:—

"I would be false to myself, I would be false to my country, if I did not say that if I thought the hon. member for Dungarvan represented the Irish Party, and the Irish Party represented my

country—and he does not represent my country—I would retire from Irish politics as from a vulgar brawl, in which no man can take part with dignity to himself or advantage to his country."§§

When O'Donnell again rose there were general hearty cheers. He put up his eye-glass and looked round, to see if the applause was intended really for him. It was not, as he quickly understood, on catching sight of Butt leaving his seat, with looks and gestures of indignation, and quitting the Chamber.

The proceedings went on amidst clamour and recurring personal encounters. Let us try to look on the scene from the English point of view. Most of the English representatives were furious at their own impotence instantly to suppress the Irish. There were certain unwritten rules of custom or traditional understandings that had been observed almost for centuries, in the interest of mutual forbearance and the convenience of all members of the Opposition and of the Government alike. Any abuse of them had always been regarded as dishonourable. They afforded scope to minorities especially for the reasonable expression of their opinions. Now they were being violated most flagrantly. The mass of British members could not understand why any section of the Irish people should object to be ruled from England—a country, in their opinion, standing first for freedom in the world—and by a free Parliament, too, in which Ireland was fully represented. But what was to them still more inscrutable was that any of the

§§"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 236, pp. 268–71.

Nationalists, even if they had a cause of complaint in regard to the government of their country, should carry their resentment so far as to try to wreck that venerable and august Assembly, the Mother of Parliaments, as they proudly called her. Such a state of things could be accounted for by the English only on the complaisant assumption that the Irish extremists were morally degenerate, or mere children, mentally, with some of the engaging ways of children, but also with their mischievous propensities.

The Obstructionists, however, thought little of the feeling of the House and cared for it less. At five o'clock in the morning they were still going strong, the whole seven of them—Parnell, so cold and disdainful, that his speeches imparted an icy chill; Biggar, more elf-like than ever, with an expression on his face of unholy delight in the prevailing confusion; O'Connor Power, massively severe and argumentative; Captain Nolan lecturing the members, and wagging his head at them, for a body of rather stupid subalterns, with whom as a commanding officer he was more sorrowful than angry; Dwyer Gray, conducting himself like a schoolboy, as if it were all excellent fun, and, in keeping with the role, adopting a light and bantering tone; Harley Kirk, the tenant-farmer, who having no gift of speech contented himself with moving that progress be reported, or that the Chairman do leave the Chair; and O'Donnell, perhaps the most provocative and challenging of all the group.

Resentment was particularly strong against

Captain Nolan. Being an army officer and on full pay, too, he was expected to be a gentleman, and yet as Sir Charles Russell, V.C., of the Guards, who sat for Westminster, said—condemning Nolan on behalf of all who held her Majesty's Commission—he was "one of the principal leaders of those who systematically obstructed the business of the House." The member for Galway retorted by saying that the fact that he was an army officer on full pay had no influence on his political opinions, and—as he had assured his constituents would be the case—made no difference in the matter of his parliamentary conduct.**

About seven o'clock, Biggar's name disappeared from the division lists. Parnell told the House why his colleague was absent. "The Government," he said, "were calling up their Reserve forces. So were the Nationalists. The first mail-boat would bring them from Ireland; and even in London, the hon. member for Cavan was peacefully asleep and would soon return like a giant refreshed. He himself hoped soon to be in a similar state of repose." It was not the fact, however, that Biggar was having a reposeful slumber. Parnell and O'Donnell had suggested that he should go across to the Westminster Palace Hotel and have a few hours' rest and breakfast. But though a very wealthy man, he had a frugal mind, and it was to the Library he repaired where he laid him down comfortably to rest on three chairs. Audacity could no further go! Conservatives and Liberals trying to snatch a wink of sleep, between divisions

**"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 236, pp. 282–3.

—each seated stiffly upright in one chair—were aghast. In the expression of their indignation, the heaviest calf-bound folios dropped with loud bangs from the shelves. So it came to pass that the member for Cavan could not sleep, but he did not greatly mind, for his opponents to the number of twenty or so, were in a like condition. Shortly after eight o'clock he returned to the House; and speaking in support of a motion to report progress, must have made everybody, outside his colleagues, feel miserable by saying, "Mr. Chairman, sir, I am the better able to go on, having had a long sleep and a good breakfast."

Parnell and O'Connor Power then left for a bath and breakfast. O'Donnell remained till the end. Young and full of vigour, he had an inexhaustible staying power. He never left the Chamber for more than five minutes, except about five o'clock, when he went out to the buffet in the Lobby for a cup of strong coffee. It happened that the approaches to the counter were crowded with members on the same errand, and O'Donnell had to wait a long time for his refreshment. Then occurred an incident, which O'Donnell, recounting it, says illustrates "the high and charming courtesy" he so often found in English opponents even when the Obstruction was keenest:—

"In front of me was standing the minister in charge of the Bill, the right hon. James Lowther, also demanding his coffee and getting served. Glancing over his shoulder he saw me, coffeeless, waiting my chance. In an instant he had slipped back from his place and his cup of coffee, and with

a gay word of parliamentary chivalry had inducted me in his stead. 'Mr. O'Donnell, you must have my coffee. I am sure you are very tired. You ought to be, for there are a hundred of our fellows dead beat. I have ordered another cup; you must take my place.'

"I could not refuse. Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen was nothing to it. As I sipped, the division bells rang. The right hon. Jim laughed merrily—'By Jove, if you have the coffee, I shall have the division.' I went on to consume the ministerial coffee and that is why, in the record of the divisions during the twenty-six hours' sitting, the right hon. James Lowther counts one division more than I."††

Close on noon, Wednesday, Sir William Harcourt threatened the Obstructionists with the penal powers of the House. O'Donnell seized the opportunity to march away with colours flying. The venue had been changed, he said, from a contest of physical endurance to a menace of expulsion and in the circumstances the Committee might proceed with the regular discussion of the Bill. Parnell was still absent. "When Parnell returned, refreshed and confident," says O'Donnell, "to find the crisis over, and the tense excitement calmer, he turned to me in furious disappointment, and almost hissed, 'Why the devil did you haul down the flag?' To which I replied with gentle intonation, 'My dear Parnell, go to the devil and inquire!'"

In the Ladies' Gallery, a beautiful girl, with

†† "The Irish Parliamentary Party," Vol. 1, p. 224.

dark hair and hazel eyes, sat all the night, a most absorbed spectator of the proceedings. She was Parnell's favourite sister and chum, Fanny—several years junior to himself—who was over on a visit from Paris, where she was living with American relatives, and in whose circles she was noted for her loveliness and wit. She was an extreme Nationalist long before her brother; a rebel in fact, for when she was but twelve, she was a contributor of patriotic verse to the Fenian organ, the *Irish People*. She died young. In her remarkable poem, "Post Mortem," addressing Ireland, she fears she would not be alive when the nations opened their queenly circle to her, and as a sweet new sister hailed her. Even so, she exclaims:—

Ah! the harpings and the salvos and the shoutings
. Of thy exiled sons returning
I should hear, though dead and mouldered, and the
grave damps
Should not chill my bosom's burning.

Ah! the tramp of feet victorious! I should hear
them
'Mid the shamrocks and the mosses,
And my heart should toss within the shroud and
quiver,
As a captive dreamer tosses.

I should turn and rend the cereclothes round me,
Giant-sinews I should borrow,
Crying, "O my brothers I have also loved her
In her loneliness and sorrow.

Let me join with you the jubilant procession,
Let me chant with you her story;
Then contented I shall go back to the shamrocks
Now mine eyes have seen her glory!"

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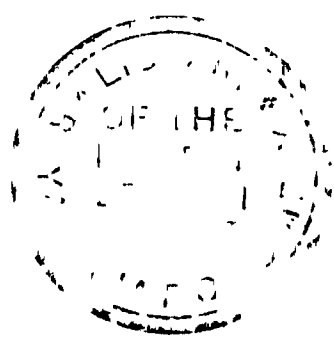

CHAPTER VIII.

DOWNFALL AND DEATH OF BUTT.

Butt might well have left the House of Commons that early morning with a feeling of sadness and foreboding. The loud cheers of the English members, approving his condemnation of his colleagues of the active policy, really sounded his knell as leader. They also heralded the advent of Parnell as chief of the Irish race, at home and abroad.

"The Seven Champions of Obstruction," as they were called, became the heroes of Ireland. On August 21, 1877—a few days after the close of the parliamentary session—a great public meeting was held in the Rotunda, Dublin, at which Biggar, Parnell, O'Connor Power and O'Donnell got triumphal receptions, and the active policy was ecstatically endorsed. "I care not for this English Parliament and its outcries," said Parnell. "I care nothing for its existence, if that existence is to continue a source of tyranny and destruction to my country." Parnell took hold on the popular imagination more than any other member of the little band of Obstructionists because of his historic descent and social position. He had also the fascination of the mysterious and inscrutable. Henceforth, he was a continual stimulus to the curiosity, interest, wonder and admiration of his countrymen. That he was a landowner and a non-

Catholic were even in his favour. It was a common saying at the time, especially by those well acquainted with the history of political movements in Ireland, that a Protestant landlord made the best leader of the Catholic Irish people. The first step towards that consummation was the election of Parnell as president of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain, in succession to Butt.

It has been represented that Butt was actually deposed by a hostile vote.* But that is not so. The Confederation held its annual meeting in Liverpool on September 1, 1877. John Denvir, the general secretary—a Fenian and a Parnellite—who wrote the official report of the proceedings, states there was no wish to displace Butt. The great body of the members were in favour of his re-election as president, "on account of his distinguished services and eminently lovable character" but wished that he would infuse more energy and force into his parliamentary policy. On taking the chair he at once announced it was his intention to retire, as he felt the position a tie, and was desirous of greater freedom of action. "The old man," says Denvir, "could see plainly enough that the people wanted to move faster than he was willing to lead; and, notwithstanding the appeals made to him, insisted upon resigning." A vote of thanks to Butt was moved by John Ferguson of Glasgow. "I feel," he said, "the greatest possible regret that our grand old chieftain, who, in trying times, raised the Irish banner, who has so long guided us, and who has been with us in so

*Barry O'Brien, "Life of Parnell" (1898), Vol. 1, p. 145.

many hard fights, is to retire from amongst us." Parnell, seconding the vote, said, "To Mr. Butt is due a debt of gratitude by the Irish people which they can never repay, for he has taught them self-reliance and a knowledge of their power." Biggar, Frank Hugh O'Donnell, and John Barry spoke in the same strain of praise and gratitude. The vote of thanks was "carried unanimously and with all sincerity and depth of feeling" and then when Butt took his farewell, Parnell was unanimously elected president.†

Barry O'Brien relates that as Butt left the hall he was followed by the man chiefly responsible for his deposition—John Barry (though he is not mentioned by name), the founder and controller of the Confederation—who desired to tell him frankly that the reason why they had chosen Parnell was that they wanted an advanced policy, and Parnell was the man to carry it out. Barry says:—

"I came up with Butt near the door. 'Mr. Butt,' I said, 'I am very sorry for what has happened, but it could not be helped.' He turned round; his eyes were filled with tears, as he said in the most touching way, 'Ah! I never thought the Irish in England would do this to me.'

"Well, my voice stuck in my throat. I couldn't say anything. Butt took my hand in both his, pressed it, and rushed off. There was not a bit of malice in the man. He was full of sorrow, but I do not think he was angry with anyone.

†John Denvir, "Life Story of an Old Rebel" (1910), pp. 192—4. Denvir gives a longer report of the meeting in an earlier book, "The Irish in Britain" (1892)

"I went back to the meeting. Parnell was there, looking like a bit of granite. But no one could help thinking he was the man to fight the English—he was so like themselves, cool, callous, inexorable, always going straight to the point, and not caring much how he got there, so long as he did get there."‡

From that time Butt's hold on the movement commenced gradually to relax. Premature physical and mental decay had set in, and, worst of all, the unhappy things of old age—delusion, a barren cause and hopeless future. But to the end he responded to his nature—friendly, good-humoured, expansive, and self-indulgent. There are two pictures of him as he appeared in the House of Commons and London social circles. Both are drawn by Englishmen. Henry W. Lucy, the famous parliamentary writer, thus presents him in the House of Commons:—

"Mr. Butt is fat, sleek-headed, and looks as if he sleeps o' nights—which indeed he does in full view of the House, occasionally waking up, roused from his post-prandial nap by the trumpet tones of Mr. Synan, or the softer voice of Mr. Mitchell Henry, and interposing between the sentences of his subalterns' speech a vigorous but inconsequential 'Hear, hear'; 'Hear, hear.'"‖

Sir Charles Dilke, the Radical M.P., states, in his memoirs, that when General Ulysses Grant of

‡"Life of Parnell," Vol. 1, pp. 145–6.
‖"Men and Manner in Parliament," p. 211.

the United States visited London in 1877, after the close of his second term of office as President of the Republic, he gave a dinner in his honour. Butt was among those invited. Grant was silent during the meal, and until he had smoked his second cigar.

"Then, as usual with him, he began to thaw under the influence of tobacco, and whispered to me—when Butt was talking very pleasantly under the influence of something besides tobacco, and with his enormous perfectly round face assuming, as it always did after dinner, the appearance of the harvest moon—'Is he a Papist?' to which I replied 'No,' whereupon Grant became friendly to him."§

Butt's plan of campaign in Parliament was a simple one. It was to move every session, if possible, a motion for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the demand of the Irish people for self-government. Three times he asked the House of Commons for this little concession—in 1874; in 1876 and 1877—and three times he was refused. On the last occasion, April 24, 1877, the motion was moved by William Shaw, the banker—"Sensible Shaw" as he was called for his prudence and moderation. He may now be remembered also as something of a prophet. Many predictions have been made in the House of Commons that never came true; but Shaw ventured on one which has been fully justified by events.

§"Life of Charles Dilke," 2 Vols. (1918), Vol. 1, p. 228.

"You may vote down the question by an overwhelming majority," said he in his concluding sentence; "but it will rise again and shatter your strongest Party combinations." Shaw spoke from the Opposition side. The motion was seconded by a new recruit of the Irish Party, who rose from the Ministerial benches. This was Captain King-Harman, of county Sligo, a most enthusiastic Home Ruler, and extremely popular in his native parts. His chief argument was that Home Rule meant closer Union with England and not separation. William Johnston, the famous Orangeman, who also spoke from the Conservative side of the House, thought otherwise. "Home Rule," he said, "covers a multitude of sins. It covers Repeal, Irish Republicanism, Federation and other things; and at the bottom of all lies a demand for severance from England." He, too, looked forward to the future. "If an Irish Parliament were set up, Ulster would not be satisfied with anything less than a Parliament of its own."

Hicks-Beach, the Chief Secretary, answered the motion with a firm and decided negative. The Home Rulers, he said, were always boasting of their patriotism. But it was a virtue possessed by English and Scottish members as well; and in their case love of country impelled them to resist a proposal which, they were convinced, would weaken, if it did not destroy, the unity and prestige of the United Kingdom. He was supported by W. E. Forster, who declared that the Liberals would never yield to the demand for Home Rule. Butt

made a most eloquent appeal. Not an angry or bitter word fell from him. He was meditative, philosophic, pleading; and, at times, melancholic, as if he were struck by the hopelessness of his grand ambition to become the reconciler of the Irish and British races in the United Kingdom, by ending, through a reasonable and safe satisfaction of Irish national sentiment, the strife between them for ever more, and welding them into one community with common interests and aims. All his great powers of eloquence and persuasion availed him nothing. He failed to convince the House; and it was to him too sacred an institution to think of trying to intimidate it. The motion was rejected by 417 votes to 67—a majority of 350. Only twelve English members voted in the minority. Major O'Gorman, summing up Butt's tactics as a parliamentary leader, said—"He is too soft with those English. He often says 'hear, hear' when he should say 'no, no.'"

Perhaps the most remarkable speech of the debate was one made by young Blennerhasset, of county Kerry. He indulged in a moving vein of prophecy:—

"The Home Rule movement may pass away as other Irish agitations have passed away before, but the causes which have produced it will remain. Older men remember that when O'Connell died it was supposed that Irish discontent had perished with its great mouthpiece; but it was as if, the

Aeolian harp being broken, men were to write an epitaph upon the wind.

"The hon. and learned member for Limerick may cease to be an influence in Irish politics, and the Party which his great gifts have gathered around him may be scattered and broken; but the deep-rooted evils in Irish life will not have been eradicated, and an ever-increasing difficulty will remain for future generations to grapple with.

"Leaders of other agitations will, no doubt, in time arise; and it may be that the dark shadow of disloyalty and revolt will again sweep over the page of Irish history. I am unable to see in such a prospect any solid ground on which to rest the hope of better things."§§

The last days of Butt's comparatively brief, but varied and eventful, life were drawing to a close. Clouds of darkness and uncertainty, as to his own personal fortunes, gathered round him, further embittering the pain he felt at the thought that the light of Home Rule, which he had pursued with such single-minded devotion, was never to illumine his path. He was poorer than ever. The post of Lord Chief Justice of Ireland became vacant. It was intimated to Butt that if he were willing to accept of it he could have it. He indignantly declined. To take it would, in his opinion, be a betrayal of Ireland. Then resorting to the money-lenders he borrowed a sum to defray his more pressing liabilities.

§§"Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 233, pp. 1742—1846.

Butt died on May 3, 1879, in a cottage outside Dublin, where he was attended by his only son, Richard, a barrister-at-law, and two daughters. For close on a month the great intellect had been darkened. Before that, when he came to know that the end was fast approaching, he had intended to go down to Mount Melleray, the Cistercian monastery in county Waterford, and spend his last days in the room which O'Connell had occupied when on Retreat; and, it is presumed, die a Catholic. He had left directions to be buried at a particular spot in the churchyard at Stranorlar, county Donegal, beneath the wall of the garden of the parsonage in which he was born and reared; and there his remains were laid to rest in the presence of a few mourners, including the faithful James Collins. Richard Pigott, editor of *The Irishman,* was also among them. He had had from Butt many fine leading articles, contributed without charge, and gifts of money, too. The only members of the Home Rule Party at the funeral were Dr. O'Leary and Phil Callan.

The Irish Nationalist Movement devoured its leaders, or pushed them aside, before their race was quite run, or rather before they thought it was themselves. Ireland, perhaps, is not quite singular in that respect. It is a characteristic of political movements, particularly those of an extreme kind, in every country. Butt met with the fate of his mighty predecessor, O'Connell—the fate of leaders who lag superfluous in the political arena. He was crowded out by the rush of the

younger men—the younger men in a desperate hurry, as is always their way, impatient of the caution and slowness of their elders; irritated even by their wrinkled brows, dim eyes and grey hair —never thinking that a time would come when they would be old themselves—thoughtless of their difficulties, thankless for their past services. Years and greyness do not, of course, always bring wisdom: but there are passages in that poetical drama, the Book of Job, which strikingly apply to the fall of Butt. The afflicted patriarch, bemoaning the passing away of his former prosperity and honour, says:—

"Unto me men gave ear, and waited and kept silence at my counsel. . . . But now they that are younger than I have me in derision. . . . . And now I am their song, aye, I am their byword. . . . . Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction. . . . . They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters, in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me."

Chapter IX.

FENIANISM AND HOME RULE.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood, taking up an attitude of opposition to Home Rule, had come into collision with some of the leaders of the movement, in the open, as well as in its own secret councils. The first to be troubled by the physical force men was Isaac Butt. The occasion was the holding of a Home Rule meeting on April 17, 1876, at which Butt was to address his constituents. On the day before the meeting, the walls of the city were posted with the following placard:—

"The Nationalists of Limerick have resolved to prevent the demonstration from assuming a Home Rule aspect, by every means in their power."

The local leader of the Fenians was a young man named John Daly. He was employed in a timber yard, with his father, as a lath-splitter, one who rends or splits wood into laths for use in the building of houses. He was gifted intellectually, a good speaker, and in temperament was most resolute and outspoken. He had been a member of Butt's election committee, and had also helped in the return of William Henry O'Sullivan, the Fenian, for county Limerick, at the General Election of 1874. In reminiscences of his career, written towards its end, Daly states that the Fenians originally agreed early in the 'Seventies

only to a toleration of the Home Rule movement, qualified by a time limit; that, in fact, Butt gave an undertaking to C. J. Doran, of Queenstown, another Fenian leader, that should he fail to win self-government in five years he would retire and leave the field clear for the revolutionaries.* The time agreed upon expired in 1876; and as Ireland was still without a Parliament, Daly was appointed by the more extreme section of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, to put down the constitutional agitation by force. The speeches at the meeting in Limerick were to be delivered from a platform erected at the O'Connell monument in George-street. A large body of the Fenians, headed by Daly, and armed with cudgels, took possession of the platform. They were however dislodged by the Home Rulers, after a desperate fight, and had to fly for treatment at the hospital for their bloody heads and faces.

It so happened that I had my first sight of Butt on that Easter Monday of 1876, in Limerick, my native place. A deeply interested youngster, I followed close to the open carriage in which Butt rode in the procession to the O'Connell monument, and gazed at the leonine face, the snow-white wisps of hair straggling from under his silk hat, and the beaming smiles with which the welcoming shouts of the populace were acknowledged. Suddenly, the expression changed. Shrill cries of anger and pain came down the street, and Butt

*"Irish Freedom" (Dublin)—the advanced Nationalist newspaper—1912.

stood up in the carriage, and with horror depicted on his face, waved his arms and called out "my poor fellows, my poor fellows," as the Fenians came running back, streaming with blood—John Daly among them, and John McInerney, the carpenter; Tom Ryan, the bill-sticker; Jer Frawley, the sandman, and Ned Hartney, the pig-jobber. Later on, as I stood on the outskirts of the crowd, that melodious voice of thrilling eloquence reached me, and I could see the figure of Butt gesticulating beneath the statue of his mighty predecessor, Daniel O'Connell.

The same forward and uncompromising section of the Brotherhood—at this time the organization was divided into three rival and contending bodies—also pursued those leaders in the constitutional agitation who were then, or had formerly been, Fenians. Their hostility was particularly directed against O'Connor Power. He, more than any other man, had induced the Fenians to give the Home Rule movement a chance. It was he who originated the idea of a nationalist movement with two wings, the one carrying out extreme action in Parliament, and the second pursuing revolutionary methods in Ireland, each acting independently of the other in its separate field, but both working in harmony towards one common end—the realisation of the completest measure of self-government that was possible, as circumstances changed from time to time.

When Butt was preparing his plans for the inauguration of the Home Rule movement, but

before he had announced them, there was living a distinguished Irish politician who, taking him all in all, was better fitted for leadership than Butt, though he had not Butt's intellectual genius. This was George Henry Moore, of Moore Hall, county Mayo, a landowner, and devoted Catholic, highly cultivated, an orator, and a Nationalist of advanced opinions. He was the one man of the gentry class who had joined the Irish Republican Brotherhood. For twenty years he had sat for his native county in Parliament; and no man that has ever appeared in the Irish Nationalist Movement was more suggestive of the typical British statesman of the Victorian era in appearance, despite his strong and unmistakably Irish face. Moore, for his statesmanlike rotund body, his side-whiskers and frock coat, and his statesmanlike manner also—that characteristic blend of the astuteness of the family solicitor and the wise solemnity of the family physician—might well have taken his seat on the Front Bench with Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. He possessed, however, a quality in which Butt was entirely lacking—a combative and determined disposition, and an impatience of all bars and restraints to the advancement of his cause.

In 1870, Moore had in contemplation the starting of a nationalist movement, part revolutionary and part constitutional. The plan was laid before him in the winter of 1868—9 by its author, O'Connor Power, and two other representative

Fenians, James O'Connor of *The Irishman*, and Edmund O'Donovan.†

Conferences took place at Moore Hall, and also at the House of Commons. Moore gave the scheme his entire approval. "I am in favour," said he to O'Connor Power, "of whatever is practicable in the struggle against English rule in Ireland."‡ But Moore died on April 17, 1870. In consequence, Butt's more moderate movement held the field.‖

O'Connor Power then gave his support to the Home Rule cause and carried many Fenians with him. But in 1876 arose a question which for years afterwards was a source of much embarrassment to Parnell, as leader of the constitutional movement, and had even a disturbing and almost disrupting effect in the secret councils of the Irish Republican Brotherhood itself. Could professed Fenians honestly support the Home Rule Movement? Above all, could they reconcile to their consciences the taking of two oaths which were utterly irreconcilable—fidelity to the Irish Republic, and allegiance, as Members of Parliament, to the Queen

†O'Donovan was the son of Professor John O'Donovan, one of the most profound of Gaelic scholars and translator of "Annals of the Four Masters." Edmund subsequently became a famous War Correspondent, "O'Donovan of Merve," and fell by the hands of the Sudanese with General Gordon in the Sudan, January, 1885. James O'Connor became a Member of the Irish Parliamentary Party.

‡O'Connor Power papers.

‖Moore was the father of George Moore, the novelist and art critic, author of "Parnell and his Island," perhaps the most ironic criticism of the Nationalist Movement ever written; and of Colonel Maurice Moore, C.B., who commanded the 1st Batt. Connaught Rangers in the South African War. The latter wrote a biography of his father, with the title "An Irish Gentleman, George Henry Moore."

of England? About five months after the occurrence in Limerick, O'Connor Power arranged to deliver a lecture on "Irish Wit and Humour," at Manchester, the centre of the north of England province of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, of which he and John Barry, the Manchester commercial traveller, were then the chief leaders; and in the Free Trade Hall, the scene of earlier oratorical triumphs of O'Connor Power, in support of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain. The chair was occupied by Biggar, who, at that time, was also a member of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. He had joined the revolutionaries towards the close of 1875, nearly two years after his election as a Member of Parliament (as he stated at the Parnell Commission in 1889) not because he had lost faith in constitutional agitation, but because he wished to checkmate the physical force theory.

It was on a Saturday night—September 16, 1876—that a great audience assembled to hear a delightful theme dealt with by a very accomplished speaker. It became evident immediately that the uncompromising Fenians were present in force for a very stern purpose, and yet not one altogether divorced from Irish wit and humour, as it is often displayed in the political arena. A Fenian went on to the platform, and introducing himself as "Mr. Flesh of Ramsbottom"—obviously a facetiously assumed name—said that before O'Connor Power spoke he wanted to put a question to him—"Did he still hold, and was he prepared to support, the

principles of Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitz-Gerald and Robert Emmet?" Both Biggar and O'Connor Power declared that the question was out of order at a non-political meeting. At once a large body of men arose from the audience in obedience to words of command, and stormed the platform. The intended lecturer was forced to retire; and the audience had to be content with one practical illustration of Irish wit and humour. Biggar remained on the platform bleeding from a cut on the head. "Oh, it isn't much," he remarked to those who were commiserating with him; "'twould be all right if we only had a bit of sticking-plaster." "Here's a bit, sir," said a workingman in the group, "I always put a bit in my pocket agin the Saturday night."

It transpired that the disturbance was organised by John Daly of Limerick. The severest condemnation of these attacks on the Home Rule Movement came from John O'Leary, one of the most distinguished of the Fenians, who had edited the organ of the revolutionaries, the *Irish People;* and after five years of penal servitude was, at this time, an exile in Paris. Writing to the *Sunday Citizen,* New York, O'Leary said: "The fact that I am altogether in agreement with what I take to be the opinions of these Limerick and Manchester rioters in no way modifies my strong feeling of the silliness and criminality of all such attempts to stifle freedom of thought and freedom of action." He added—"The claim to close my mouth, whether it comes from the Pope of Rome or a Limerick

workman, is a foul tyranny." The lecture was delivered by O'Connor Power, within a fortnight, and in the same hall. Biggar again presided. The Irish of Manchester and Liverpool, revolutionaries and constitutionalists, banded together to put down any rowdyism should it again arise; but instead of that, O'Connor Power was received with "deafening cheers, again and again repeated," according to the newspaper report. The defence of the Fenians who supported Home Rule was stated by Biggar in his abrupt, blunt and decisive way. Having said that the gentlemen who had broken up the previous meeting were greatly to blame, he went on:—

"They ought to give credit for each of the different ways in which Irish interests were sought to be furthered (hear, hear). They could be furthered on the platform, in the Press, and by the plan which these gentlemen seemed to think the better one—physical force. He did not find fault with any of these plans. He thought that the advocates of each should give all the support in their power to one another, and thus the united power of the Irish race would be brought into play for the greatest possible good of Ireland (cheers). The best platform which they could avail themselves of was the House of Commons.

"As to physical force, there was no moral objection to the carrying out of such views, if they had a reasonable prospect of success (loud and prolonged cheering). But if they had not reasonable

prospects of success, the man who would advocate a physical force movement against the present power of England would be highly culpable and unreasonable (hear, hear). The duty of the physical force advocates was to assist, by all the means in their power, every other honest and determined movement in favour of the Irish race (hear, hear). If they did this till England got into difficulties, then the Irish physical force might be felt. But until England was at war with another great European Power, Irish Nationalists who advocated physical force, had no practical chance of beating her."§

At this time, before the rise of the star of Parnell —though it had made its appearance on the horizon —O'Connor Power held a high position in the House of Commons for his oratory—his name in that respect was coupled with Gladstone and Disraeli—and a commanding one in Ireland, for the same reason, and not less for his advanced opinions also. He was looked up to as the most likely leader of the more nationalist and active section of the Home Rulers when the split in the Party took place, an event which, even then, was regarded as inevitable. In the autumn of 1876, shortly after the attack made upon him by the Fenians at Manchester, proof was forthcoming of the esteem and admiration in which he was held by extremists in

§These extracts are taken from a report of the proceedings in an issue of the "United Irishman" (a weekly journal then published in Liverpool in support of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain) among the O'Connor Power papers.

Ireland. The United States were celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Republic. At a public meeting held in Dublin, and promoted largely by the Fenians, it was decided to send to President Grant, as head of the Republic, the congratulations of the Irish people. O'Connor Power and Parnell were selected as a delegation to take the address, illuminated on parchment and framed, to the United States in the fall of the year. President Grant announced that he would be glad to receive the address if it came, in accordance with the observances of diplomacy, through the British Ambassador at Washington. Parnell and O'Connor Power refused to fall in with this arrangement. It would be absurd, they said, to present through the British Ambassador congratulations to a people for having flung off the British yoke, from a people who were struggling to free themselves from the British yoke. They decided to have a new address prepared and illuminated for presentation to the House of Representatives. As Parnell had to return home, this very difficult and delicate matter was left in the hands of O'Connor Power to arrange.

O'Connor Power was eminently successful, helped as he was by a man who commanded considerable influence in America—Dion Boucicault, the Irish dramatist and actor, who had been associated with the Young Ireland movement and was a sympathiser with the Fenian idea, if not a sworn adherent of it. The House of Representa-

tives agreed to accept the address. It thus attracted far more public notice and elicited a far more remarkable acknowledgment than would have been the case had it been presented direct to the President. On March 4, 1877, the House of Representatives passed a unanimous resolution, which, after setting forth, in glowing terms, instances of the services rendered by Ireland, and Irishmen in the United States, to the cause of the Republic, thus concluded:—

"Be it resolved by the House of Representatives —that the people of the United States of America accept the congratulations of the people of Ireland, with a profound acknowledgment and grateful recognition of the cordial sympathy always entertained and manifested toward themselves and their institutions, from the first struggle for freedom of our infant nation to the present time; and we sincerely hope that the example of this Republic will spread its benign influence among the nations of the earth until the principles of self-government shall be firmly established, and descend, as a sacred heritage, to all future generations."§§

O'Connor Power got back from America in time to take a leading part (as we have seen) in the obstruction of Government business in the House of Commons during the session of 1877. In the autumn of the year, he was associated with Parnell and Biggar in advocating "the new Irish policy in Parliament" at public meetings in the north of

§§O'Connor Power papers.

England and Scotland. One of these meetings, held at Dumbarton—about twelve miles beyond Glasgow—in the Burgh Hall, was marked by extraordinary incidents. John Ferguson of Glasgow presided. Parnell was the principal speaker. It had been announced on the bills calling the meeting that O'Connor Power would also attend, but the chairman, at the opening of the proceedings, read a telegram from him saying that he could not come. While Parnell was speaking a noise was heard in the corridors outside, which the Glasgow newspapers, in their report of the meeting, described as like the tread of a host of armed men. Immediately several of those on the platform hastily departed, as if they feared a coming terror, but half the audience rose and cheered, which showed that they had knowledge of the purpose of the approaching host, and sympathised with it. The doors of the hall, which had been locked by the stewards of the meeting, were soon forced open, and in came 600 men led by John Daly of Limerick. They were Fenians, and had come down from Glasgow by special train in pursuit of O'Connor Power. On learning that their intended victim was not present, they vented their disappointment in cries of rage.

Parnell said not a word in defence of the ablest and most influential of his colleagues in the active policy, thus outrageously attacked; or in support of open freedom of opinion and speech—the basic principle of all constitutional agitation—against

this organised intimidation by members of a secret society. On the contrary, he effusively invited Daly to the platform as "an old associate of his in the task of putting down West Britonism in Ireland"—and "wished that Ireland had many men like him." Daly presented himself with the air of a conqueror, and received a tremendous ovation. He was vindictive and implacable in his denunciation of O'Connor Power. In the course of his speech he said:—

"They did not come there against Home Rule; it was played out. They did not come there against Obstruction; it was too contemptible for men who had a glorious cause at heart to interfere with. But they came there to chastise a pretended friend; to tell the Irishmen of Glasgow that O'Connor Power was no Nationalist; that he had become a renegade to the principles he once practised, and would be pursued with all the unrelenting vengeance of which Irishmen could be capable, and hunted from every platform in the land. The Nationalists respected Mr. Parnell, because he was faithful to the opinions he always professed, but O'Connor Power was a traitor and should receive condign punishment."**

O'Connor Power was not a man to be put down in this fashion. He went through with the meetings he had arranged to address in Scotland, save at Hamilton—within easy distance of Glasgow—

**"Flag of Ireland" (a Nationalist weekly newspaper), Dublin, September 20, 1877.

where Daly and his band followed him, and to save himself from their physical violence had to fly from the hall by a back door. At the same time, the connection with the Irish Republican Brotherhood of O'Connor Power, Biggar and John Barry was severed against their will. They were called upon to resign from the Supreme Council, or else cease their support of the parliamentary movement. Barry resigned; and Biggar and O'Connor Power, on declining to do so, were expelled.

These events naturally caused Parnell much anxiety, lest his cause might be ruined, or its progress be hampered, by Fenian opposition. The first steps were then taken by him to try to enlist the support of the Fenians in the active policy in the House of Commons, or, failing that, to bring about a mutual toleration between the revolutionaries and the constitutionalists. In the spring of 1878 a joint conference was held in London. The Fenians of the United States were represented by Dr. William Carroll, one of the leading physicians of Philadelphia, and the Supreme Council of the home organisation by John O'Leary of Paris. Parnell and Frank Hugh O'Donnell met them on behalf of the parliamentarians. It was in the Surrey Hotel, Surrey-street, Strand, (where Carroll was staying) that this "voice and sword conference"—as it was called—deliberated. Nothing came of it. The Fenian delegates were utterly opposed to any accommodation of any kind between the rival policies of physical force and constitutionalism. "O'Leary," says O'Donnell, "almost

opened the proceedings by turning to us in that cold, courtly way of his, and remarking—' I ought to forewarn you, gentlemen, that I have not yet been able to see how Ireland is to be freed by keeping the Speaker of the English House of Commons out of bed.' "††

In the autumn of 1878 another attempt was made to bring about an understanding between "physical force" and " moral force." The matter was taken in hand by Michael Davitt. On his release in 1877 from penal servitude, to which he had been condemned in 1870 for the importation into Ireland of fire-arms for revolutionary purposes, he was elected to the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Going to America, on this mission, Davitt was successful in obtaining the support of the " Revolutionary Directory" of the Clan-na-Gael—the most widely extended and powerful of the advanced nationalist organisations in the United States—and they sent John Devoy, an old Fenian, to Ireland as their representative, with Davitt, to try to induce the leaders of the I.R.B. to go into the constitutional movement, so as to direct its operations in aid of their own revolutionary aims. Devoy and Davitt failed in this purpose. The question came up at a meeting of the Supreme Council of the I.R.B. held in Paris, early in 1879, and attended by Davitt and Devoy. The opposition prevailed. It was led by John O'Leary, and also Charles Kickham, the poet and novelist, best known for his delightful scenes

†† "The Irish Parliamentary Party," Vol. 1, pp. 246–7.

of Irish rural life in *Knocknagow*. Devoy suggests that it was enmity to O'Connor Power which decided most of those present to have nothing to do with "The New Departure" as the proposed development was called. Members of the organisation were, however, left free to act individually as they pleased.‡‡

Parnell was next approached by Davitt and Devoy. They invited him to make his policy still bolder and more advanced with a view to attracting physical force men, in greater numbers, to his standard. Parnell declined to enter into any formal alliance with the Fenians. He feared that in a time of great political excitement they might attempt to push him farther than he would deem it prudent to go. But he agreed to assume the leadership of the Land League agitation for the abolition of landlordism, which, having been started in county Mayo, was then rapidly spreading, and about to set Ireland in a blaze. Several members of the Directory of the League were Fenians.‖‖ Parnell, in fact, was of opinion that an arrangement between a revolutionary conspiracy and an open movement, with obligations one to the other, was impracticable. But he got what he really desired—the toleration, the sympathy, the support, of the Fenians, while retaining the control of policy entirely in his own hands. Parnell's aim was to minimise Nationalist differences, to secure

‡‡"Fragments of Fenian History," by John Devoy, in "Irish Freedom" (Dublin), 1913.

‖‖Devoy, Introduction to "The Land of Eire" (New York, 1883).

co-operation between revolutionaries and constitutionalists, in the interest of the parliamentary movement. Devoy's object was entirely different. He was concerned solely for the revolutionary movement.

CHAPTER X.

THE PARNELLITE PARTY.

Lord Beaconsfield dissolved Parliament early in 1880, and in a manifesto solemnly warned the electors that the object of the Land League agitation, then raging in Ireland, was to sever the tie between that country and Great Britain. The answer of Great Britain was to drive that great Imperial and Conservative statesman from power, and give a large majority to Gladstone, who claimed that the policy of the Liberal Party was the mainstay of the Union. The result in Ireland was to confirm Parnell in his position as leader of the Irish people, and provide him with a Parliamentary Party for the working out of his ends. Sixty-five Home Rulers were elected. Those who declared themselves supporters of Parnell, in their appeal to the constituencies, numbered thirty-six.

Most of the leading moderates of Butt's orginal Party disappeared. Among them was Lord Robert Montagu. He did not seek re-election. In 1877 he left the Home Rule League in protest against the active policy. Montagu was afflicted with too independent and unstable a mind. In 1882 he rejoined the Church of England, not on theological grounds, but on political, as he explained in his "Reasons for Leaving the Church of Rome" (1886). In his view there was a conspiracy among

the leaders of both political Parties, Conservative and Liberal, to bring England under the dominion of the Papacy, and he spent the remainder of his life in denouncing the iniquities of that religion and that country which, in the days of what he would call his mental delusion, as the representative of an Irish county, intensely Catholic, he had lauded for their virtues, and the resignation with which they bore calumny and misfortune. Sir George Bowyer also retired with the opinion that it was scarcely becoming for an English gentleman to acknowledge ever having been a member of the Irish Party. The third Englishman in the Party, Mitchell Henry, was, however, returned again by county Galway.

A great sweep was made of those Irish members of the Party who had looked askance at Parnell and raised their voices against Obstruction. Among these victims was Chevalier Keyes O'Clery, the champion of Catholic interests in the House of Commons. He was ousted from county Wexford by John Barry, formerly of Manchester, and at this period a linoleum manufacturer at Kirkcaldy, Scotland. It was at a meeting in support of Barry's candidature, held at Enniscorthy, that Parnell was assailed, for the first and only time, by a band of physical force men, who turned out for O'Clery. They would not listen to Parnell. They struck him on the face with a rotten orange, and tore his trousers in an attempt to pull him off the platform. He was advised by the chairman

to retire. "I will say a word for John Barry," he declared, "if I have to stand here all day."

Colonel King-Harman also lost his seat. The discomfiture of this great landlord, and very genial and popular man, on his native heath, was effected by a young, and then unknown, Dublin journalist, Thomas Sexton, editor of the *Weekly News*. But the most striking defeat of all was that of The O'Conor Don—the leading Catholic layman of Ireland—in county Roscommon. It was made all the more significant by the personality and career of the victor, James J. O'Kelly, of the Irish-American revolutionary organisation, the Clan-na-Gael. Some of the old members got returned. Among them were William Shaw (the leader of the Party in succession to Butt), George Errington, Rowland Blennerhassett, Sir Patrick O'Brien; Sir Joseph Neale McKenna, and these two more prominent men—The O'Donoghue, still an opponent of the Nationalist movement, but still member for Tralee, and P. J. Smyth, who having described the Land League as "a league of hell," had no chance of being re-elected for Westmeath, but found in county Tipperary a seat in recognition of his advanced Repeal views.

All the Obstructionists were re-elected, Biggar, O'Connor Power, Frank Hugh O'Donnell, as well as Parnell, who was returned for three seats; and such other supporters, more or less, of the active policy, as A. M. Sullivan, Colonel Nolan, Dwyer Gray, Richard Power, W. H. O'Sullivan, Phil

Callan. But there was one most lamentable disappearance. The gigantic frame, the loud voice, the hilarious moods, of Major O'Gorman were lost to the House of Commons. He stood again, with Richard Power, for Waterford city (two seats) but was rejected in favour of Edmund Leamy, a local solicitor (afterwards a barrister-at-law) who was eloquent and earnest, two qualities that were deemed to be more serviceable in the stern times that had now come than inconsequential humour. Among the new members were several remarkable and talented men, in addition to the four already mentioned. The O'Gorman Mahon, in his 77th year, but still upright as a pine, was sent by his native county, Clare, to the House of Commons, where fifty years previously he was an adherent of O'Connell. Another was T. D. Sullivan, editor of *The Nation*. He was born in 1827 at Bantry, where he followed for some years his father's calling as a house-painter, before joining his younger brother, A. M. Sullivan, in the management of *The Nation*. T. D. was like A. M. in appearance. He was not so eloquent but was more humorous, and had the gift of giving racy expression to popular sentiment in ballads, being the author of "God Save Ireland" which, as a song extolling the Manchester Martyrs, rivalled for many years "The Wearin' of the Green."

But of the elder new members, the most distinguished and widely known, was Justin McCarthy, journalist, novelist and historian, born at Cork in 1830. He was elected for county Longford as a

supporter of Parnell at a by-election in 1879, when the first two volumes of his *History of Our Own Times* had just been published in London and was proving the greatest popular success in its line since Macaulay. The best of his novels, "A Fair Saxon" (1873) and "Dear Lady Disdain" (1875) were still being frequently asked for by subscribers to Mudie's lending library; but his history was far more interesting than his fiction. He was a plump little man, with grey clustering locks, whose placid demeanour made him strikingly conspicuous in that emotional section of the House "the Irish quarter" as with uplifted head he beamed through his gold spectacles and contemplatively stroked his beard. On his feet addressing the House he was most urbane and courteous. His voice was soft and soothing, like the ripple of a pleasant stream; he indulged in a few simple gestures of the right hand, and his sentences, cultured and polished, had just a winning touch of the stately eloquence of old. But, mild-mannered man though he was, and a favourite also in London drawing-rooms, he never showed the slightest evidence of vacillation or indecision as a Nationalist in the whole of his long political and literary career. He was among the first to rally to the support of Parnell's policy of obstruction, and he stood by the side of the Irish leader in those trying years that were now at hand—especially trying for McCarthy—when the Nationalists were bitterly at war with the Liberal Party, to the leading members of which he was attached by the

ties of general political sympathy and personal friendship.

But, as events were to show, the men of importance were not so much the veterans, with established reputations, but the younger men, untried and comparatively obscure. The General Election, or by-elections which arose out of it, brought into the Nationalist Movement several young representatives of the type of O'Connor Power and Frank Hugh O'Donnell, which the average plain man fears so much in politics—"intellectuals" and "adventurers," men in neither the professions nor commerce, men of humble birth and station—writers, talkers, and such like, very able, eager, bold and daring, but greatly to be suspected and feared (according to the plain sensible man), because they had no solid stake in the country, to quote the time-honoured phrase. The first of this group was Thomas Sexton, the journalist. He was born at Waterford, the son of a constable of the Royal Irish Constabulary. At the age of twelve he got a post as junior clerk in the offices of the Waterford and Limerick Railway. In 1869, A. M. Sullivan of *The Nation* invited young men with literary tastes, to compete for a post on his staff by sending in essays and leading articles. Sexton, still a railway clerk, was one of the successful contributors; and at the age of 19 he entered the editorial room of the famous *Nation*.* Within a

*There were two other appointments—Richard Dowling, the novelist, author of "The Mystery of Killard"; and John Joseph Clancy, then a classical teacher at Holy Cross Seminary, Tralee, and subsequently M.P.

year he was appointed editor of the *Weekly News*, which was published in the same office. Ireland, that land of unrest and political agitation, has more than any other land, perhaps, afforded opportunities to the humblest man, if he has but the power of speech, of distinguishing himself on the public platform, and, as a consequence, getting elected to the House of Commons. But Sexton's ability as a speaker was most exceptional, even in Ireland, and along with that he had a gift, rare among orators, of mastering details and statistics, which, altogether, constituted him one of the subtlest and most penetrating minds of the Party. In person, Sexton was slightly built and of medium height. The face was small, the forehead broad and high, and the complexion remarkably florid amid a black beard and heavy crop of black hair.

Another recruit of quite an opposite type, but equally clever in his different way, was Timothy Michael Healy. He was born in 1855 at Bantry, county Cork, where his father was clerk of the Poor Law Union, and was related to the Sullivans of the *Nation*. Like Sexton, he emerged from a railway clerkship into journalistic and public life. Before he was 16, he was shorthand clerk in the office of the superintendent of the North Eastern Railway at Newcastle-on-Tyne, which he left in 1878 to become confidential clerk in the firm of floor-cloth manufacturers, London, of which John Barry was a partner, and at the same time he wrote for the *Nation* graphic descriptions of the brave deeds of the Obstructionists in Parliament. His

call to public life came when Parnell appointed him secretary on his mission to the United States in the winter of 1879, to raise funds for the agrarian movement in Ireland. Healy's characteristic as a speaker was an extraordinary blending of scorching satire, melting pathos, and infectious humour —not the result of carefully prepared distillation, but pouring forth from a most original and fertile mind, with all the spontaneity and inexhaustibility of a natural spring.

Not less remarkable was Thomas Power O'Connor, who followed the calling of a journalist in London. He was born in 1848 in the old historic town of Athlone. His father kept a billiard-saloon and his mother was the daughter of an old soldier, long associated in a non-commissioned rank with the 88th Foot, or Connaught Rangers, at the extensive military barracks of the town. The boy was brought up, as he used to say, to the strains of "The British Grenadiers," "Rule Britannia" and "The Red, White and Blue" played by the bands. At the age of 18 he graduated B.A. and senior scholar in history and modern languages, at the Queen's College, Galway. In 1867, he was appointed junior reporter on *Saunders' Newsletter*, an old and staid Conservative daily paper published in Dublin. When he was 21, he set out to seek in London a wider sphere for the use of his literary talent. That was in 1870. The Franco-Prussian War had broken out, and his knowledge of French and German got him a seat in the sub-editor's room of the *Daily Telegraph*. After a few years of this

work he became a " free lance," without any settled position, sending news paragraphs or other contributions to various papers on the chance that they might be published and paid for. It was a most precarious occupation, and O'Connor's sufferings in pursuit of it were the source of the sympathy and help he always extended to struggling writers in the years of prosperity and fame that were to come. He also began to take an active, though humble, part as a Radical in politics by addressing workmen's clubs. It was during this period that he wrote his first book, the *Life of Lord Beaconsfield*. He read all day in the Library of the British Museum, and wrote late into the night in his bedroom in South London. As he was too poor to buy paper, pen and ink, he used a pencil and the backs of advertisement handbills of a famous pill and ointment, which were then being distributed by tens of thousands on the streets. The biography was first published in serial numbers, anonymously. It was so unsparing an attack upon the Prime Minister that it attracted considerable attention, and gave its author, who put his name to it when it appeared in book form in 1879, his first lift into public notice.

O'Connor worked for the Central News in the Reporters' Gallery of the House of Commons, and saw, with sympathy, the active policy of Parnell and Biggar in operation. But when, towards the end of 1879, a General Election was known not to be far off, and he decided to make a bid for a seat in Parliament, it was as a British Radical rather

than as an Irish Nationalist he was disposed to stand. He was vice-president of the Lambeth Radical Association, which was easily the most advanced and aggressive body of the kind. Having obtained a promise of nomination for the borough of Dewsbury, Yorkshire, he went to Parnell to enlist the support of such Nationalist voters as resided in the town, and mentioned that he was known to Frank Hugh O'Donnell. In his *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, O'Donnell states that he was at Queen's College, Galway, with O'Connor, and describes him as "a very bright and popular lad with a decidedly eloquent turn of speech in the debating society." "I knew him again in London," O'Donnell proceeds, "when he was an overworked sub-editor on the *Daily Telegraph*. It was the time of the famous dispatch by balloon-post from 'Our Special Correspondent' in besieged Paris, and people said that the whole of the local colour, the vivid touches of real Paris life under bombardment, were due to picturesque expansion and the inspired vision of an Irish sub-editor." He says this story made Parnell laugh more than he had ever been known to laugh before. But the upshot was that O'Connor was induced to stand for the borough of Galway as a Nationalist and was elected. O'Connor had the gift of easy and graphic expression as speaker as well as writer, and personally was a fine type of the genial, good-humoured and generous Irishman.

There was another O'Connor, Arthur, but one wholly dissimilar from T.P. in appearance, manner

and bent of mind. He was born in London in 1844, his father being the senior physician of the Royal Free Hospital; was educated at the Catholic College, Ushaw, Durham; won by competition a clerkship in the War Office in 1863, and had just retired after seventeen years' service in Pall Mall to become a student for the Bar. He was like a typical London professional man—very composed, reserved, cautious, with nothing of the untamed exuberance of the Gael, which characterised so many of his colleagues. Arthur O'Connor brought to the Irish Party a solid statistical mind, and the atmosphere of officialdom. The nearest approach to the same type was John Edward Redmond, son of William Archer Redmond, the Home Rule representative of the borough of Wexford, who died shortly after the General Election of 1880. Redmond, however, was a far abler man than Arthur O'Connor, and more endowed with the qualities for parliamentary life and leadership. Even at this early period of his career he had that impressive air of dignity, suavity and strength, as a speaker, which the House of Commons was to know and appreciate for many years. Redmond was educated at Clongowes, the great school of the Jesuits in Ireland. For a time the choice of a profession was a matter of doubt. Redmond thought of becoming a priest and joining the Jesuit Order; he thought also of the Army, with which his family was connected on both sides, for his uncle—his father's brother—was a General, and his maternal grandfather was a General. The matter was

decided while he was a student at Trinity College, Dublin, and twenty-two years of age. He was appointed a clerk to the House of Commons—not one of the three gowned and bewigged gentlemen who sit at the Table, but of the outside establishment, the particular department to which he was attached being the Vote Office, which has charge of the preparation and distribution of parliamentary papers. This appointment was decisive of Redmond's career. The clerks of the House of Commons have the privilege of seats in the members' galleries during a debate. Young Redmond was to be seen in the gallery every night, watching with interest and approval the development of Parnell's policy of speaking on any subject, or at any time, that at all tended to interrupt and delay the regular movement of business.

Unlike all the others was James J. O'Kelly. He was a typical soldier of the old school—dash and daring and resolution were expressed in his heavy jaw, bristling eyebrows, resolute blue-grey eyes, thick moustache, and not less in his curt and barrack-square style of speech. It used to be said afterwards in the House of Commons that some English members were intimidated by his truculent bearing, when divisions were taken, from entering —not the same lobby with him, but the opposite one.

O'Kelly was the son of a Dublin iron-founder, and was born in 1845. At the age of 18 he joined the Foreign Legion of the French Army. He served in the campaign for the suppression of the

Arabian tribes in Algeria in the early 'Sixties. When the offer by Napoleon III. of the Mexican Imperial Crown was accepted by the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian, O'Kelly's regiment was included in the forces sent by the French Emperor to Mexico. The project ended in disaster and Maximilian was shot in 1867. O'Kelly immediately returned to France, and fought in the Franco-German War till the capitulation of Paris to the successful enemy in 1870. Afterwards he acted for about a year, as Fenian agent in England for the exportation of firearms to Ireland. The next exploits of O'Kelly were journalistic. He went to the United States and obtained a post on the *New York Herald*. In 1873, when the Cubans were in revolt against Spain, that paper sent him to Cuba entrusted with the perilous task of penetrating to the rebel lines in order to obtain from their leaders the reasons for the insurrection. He was in Ireland, on behalf of the Clan-na-Gael, when he accepted Parnell's invitation to join the Parliamentary Party.

None of these men, very clever though they all were in their distinctive ways, had quite the magic on their lips by which alone the hearts of the people can be reached through speech. But that inspiring quality was not lacking in the group of young Nationalists. It was supplied by John Dillon. Holding then the extremest Nationalist views, he was a constitutionalist solely because of the hopelessness of an appeal to physical force against the military might of England. It was he who more

than any other of Parnell's parliamentary adherents embodied (like Michael Davitt outside the Party) the revolutionary passion of the Land League, the wild and blind groping of the oppressed and maddened people for some means to end it all—the destruction of landlordism, not only for its own evil past, but as the chief prop of English domination in Ireland.

Dillon was born in Dublin in 1852. He was educated at the College of the Catholic University, Dublin; and was a Licentiate of the College of Surgeons, but abandoned medicine, tried the cotton trade in Manchester, with John Bright, who was an old friend of his family, but soon wearied of that calling also. He sat for Tipperary, that great county which his father, John Blake Dillon, the '48 rebel, represented for a brief period, before his death in 1866. Dillon had a presence which enhanced his influence and reputation—tall and commanding, a long sensitive face, sallow complexioned, set off by jet-black glossy hair and beard, and brown eyes, large, deep and tranquil. He sat for the Christ in an altar-piece, painted for an Australian Church, by an eminent English artist, Henry Haliday. As a speaker Dillon was simple and unadorned in style, but highly effective for his spontaneity and earnestness, and the ringing tones of his fine voice.

This group of young men—joined, soon afterwards, by William O'Brien, one of the most brilliant journalists Ireland has produced—constituted Parnell's first lieutenants for the ensuing ten years.

Great as Parnell was in himself, they enhanced his reputation and ever-swelling renown during that decade, by the ability and energy with which they exercised their different qualities of mind in devotion to him and his cause. Their first step was to have him elected chairman of the Irish Party, as well as leader of the Irish people, which he was already. The Party met in the City Hall, Dublin. Dwyer Gray, of the *Freeman's Journal*, who was then Lord Mayor, presided. The attendance was not large, only forty-one members being present. The re-election of Shaw was proposed by Maurice Brooks and seconded by Richard Power, both old members of the Party. Parnell was nominated by The O'Gorman Mahon and Biggar. The voting was twenty-three for Parnell and eighteen for Shaw.

Shaw's supporters were almost entirely survivors of the old Party, among the best known of them being Sir Patrick O'Brien, George Errington, P. J. Smyth, Neale McKenna, Synan, Phil Callan and Dwyer Gray. Only one of the old members voted for Parnell—W. H. O'Sullivan, the ex-Fenian. His supporters were—Sexton, O'Kelly, Justin McCarthy, John Barry, Arthur O'Connor, T. P. O'Connor, Biggar, T. D. Sullivan, Edmund Leamy and The O'Gorman Mahon and Parnell himself. Also, John Daly, a Cork merchant; Henry Joseph Gill, the Dublin publisher and bookseller; Andrew Commins, a barrister-at-law, residing at Liverpool; Charles Dawson, in the bakery trade, Dublin, a writer and a fervid speaker; Lysaght Finnigan, a

London journalist who had fought in the Irish Legion for France in the Franco-German War; Captain William Henry O'Shea, a retired Army officer; Garrett Byrne, an estate broker in Liverpool and London; James Carlile McCoan, just returned from the Levant, Constantinople, where he founded and edited *The Levant Herald*, and practised as a barrister for years; and three elderly country gentlemen, Edward Mulhallen Marum, county Kilkenny, who wrote *Protestant Ascendency in Ireland—Its Cause and Cure;* and William Joseph Corbett, a poet, author of *Songs of My Summer Time*, and Richard Lalor of Tenakill, Queen's county, of a family conspicuous in political history.

Dillon was away in the United States, completing the American Land League, which was being founded by Parnell when the General Election hurriedly recalled him to Ireland; and Healy, Redmond and O'Brien were not yet M.P.'s.

Among the members of the old Party who did not attend were three of the most celebrated—A. M. Sullivan; O'Connor Power and Frank Hugh O'Donnell. Sullivan was not wholly in sympathy with the movement to get rid of Shaw in favour of Parnell. Henceforth he devoted himself mainly to securing a position at the English Bar. The absence of O'Connor Power and O'Donnell was more significant still. Both of them viewed with disfavour the displacement of Home Rule for the Land League. Each also had the ambition of being elected leader.

Chapter XI.

LONGEST SITTING OF THE COMMONS.

The larger section of the Home Rulers, over forty in number, returned to the seats occupied by the Party in the late Parliament, below the gangway on the Opposition side, where they were surrounded formerly by Radicals and now by Conservatives. Shaw led several of the old members, about twenty, across the floor with the Liberals. They still belonged nominally to the Home Rule Party; but they soon severed even this slight tie which connected them with the Nationalist Movement, and became absorbed in the mass of the Ministerialists. The most distinguished of this group was P. J. Smyth.

Parnell's new adherents regarded themselves as vehemently in opposition. They were imbued with a sense of nationalism far more intense and advanced than the old. They were determined to present Ireland to the House of Commons not as a subordinate part of the United Kingdom, asking for the amelioration of this grievance or of that, but as a country fully conscious of her separate nationality and resolutely bent on having her desires. These were—as the Land League movement disclosed—the abolition of landlordism, to begin with, and, afterwards, a separate Parliament.

As the Liberals looked across the floor at this

band of Irishmen, and consulted *Dod* for biographical information concerning them, it must have come as a surprise—mingled, perhaps, with relief—when they found that even the most advanced declared themselves on the Liberal side in politics. For the Parnellites followed the example set by the majority of their predecessors in the Party under Butt by designating themselves in *Dod* as Liberals. John Dillon was content with the old common form—"A Liberal, and in favour of the system called Home Rule in Ireland." The only mention of the Land League was in T. M. Healy's declaration of his principles—"Is an advanced Liberal, in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, and of the Land League organisation." T. P. O'Connor, true to his first political faith, described himself as "An advanced Radical." James O'Kelly, a Fenian, did not call himself a Liberal, but adopted Parnell's words—"Is in favour of the system called Home Rule for Ireland." John Barry, another Fenian, did—"A Liberal, in favour of the restoration of legislative independence to Ireland." The only one who described himself simply as "An Irish Nationalist" was old Richard Lalor.

In the session of 1881, the Parnellites forced the House of Commons to hold the most protracted sitting in its long history and compelled the Government greatly to curtail freedom of discussion in order to cope with them. The occasion was the announcement by Gladstone that a Bill for the vindication of law and order in Ireland would be

immediately introduced by W. E. Forster, the Chief Secretary, and pushed rapidly through all its stages. This was the Protection of Person and Property Bill which, by suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, gave the authorities power to arrest all persons "reasonably suspected" of certain specified offences, and keep them in prison without trial. The Parnellites vowed to resist the passing of the Bill with all the obstructive forces at their command, which were practically limited only by the extent of their resource in the use of the forms of the House, of their powers of speech, and of their physical endurance.

To the motion for leave to bring in the Bill they moved an amendment declaring that coercion should be preceded by a reform of the land laws. The debate had already been spread over three sittings, long drawn out, when, on Monday, January 31, 1881, Gladstone declared that the Government meant to obtain the first reading of the Bill before the House adjourned. The mingling cheers of the Opposition and Ministerialists showed that this determination had the support of both sides. In the defiant shouts of the Parnellites there was again an avowed intention to defeat it. The temper of the House was also manifested in a long speech delivered early in the sitting by Parnell, and the impatience with which it was listened to by Liberals and Conservatives alike. The Irish leader read many extracts from an article in the *Edinburgh Review* to show that the agitation conducted by Daniel O'Connell in the 'Forties,

which the Prime Minister had favourably contrasted with the Land League, received, in its time, the same meed of British reprobation. Again and again the Speaker was appealed to from both sides to rule that Parnell was wasting the time of the House. "I am bound to say," said the Speaker at last, "that the honourable member is really trying very severely the patience of the House." "I would not for the world transgress the rule of the Chair," replied Mr. Parnell in that icily ironical voice of his that was so expressive of seated enmity, "but I am bound to say that I shall have to try very severely the patience of the House in the course of this debate."

The discussion continued till one o'clock, the hour at which the House usually rose, when a motion for the adjournment of the debate was moved by the Parnellites. There was an unmistakable note of indignation and resentment in the tone of the Prime Minister's brief reply. "I beg to say on behalf of the Government," he answered, "that we propose to resist that motion." Both sides prepared for a stubborn and protracted contest of sheer brute force. It was now solely a matter of each holding out to tire the other down. Accordingly both sides adopted a system of relays. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker took turns in the Chair. The Government Whips divided their followers into batches, which alternately remained on call at St. Stephen's, and went home for a few hours' sleep. The Parnellites off guard rested in various rooms of the building. The Chamber itself

was almost deserted. Members were continually coming and going. Few remained to listen to the voice of some Irish Member speaking at amazingly inordinate length to almost empty benches. There were many divisions, of course. All through that Monday night, and all through the morning, noon, and evening of Tuesday, a motion for the adjournment of the debate followed a motion for the adjournment of the House in regular succession, and the small attendance enabled the Parnellites to introduce some variety into the proceedings by frequently calling attention to the fact that the required quorum of forty members was not present. These motions and counts were followed by the ringing of the division bells summoning members to the Chamber, but when the question was decided in the negative, most of the members again disappeared.

So the contest proceeded. At eight o'clock on Tuesday morning T. M. Healy moved the adjournment of the House in a speech of mordant humour edged with contempt, which lasted two hours and a half. "The Irish Members," he said, "had been referred to as a minority endeavouring to put down the majority. But the majority were at home in bed; and the supporters of the Government who were in the House only made known the fact that they were awake by their interruptions." On Tuesday evening the House was crowded. The tactics of the Parnellites had aroused intense public interest, not unmixed with indignation, and the galleries were packed with eager and angry

spectators. "Is this," they probably asked themselves, "the price we have to pay for that freedom in the House of Commons for which our forefathers fought and died"? The Lords' Gallery was crowded with peers, consumed with curiosity, like lesser mortals, as to the ultimate conclusion of this extraordinary scene. But the end was still a long way off.

Mr. Parnell was interrupted at midnight by Milbank, a Ministerialist, who asked the Deputy Speaker whether, as the hon. member had been called to order four times for irrelevance, he should not be "named" and suspended for obstruction. No notice of the question was taken by the Chair, and Parnell was about to resume his speech when Milbank, again interposing, called attention to the fact that Biggar had referred to him as "a bloody fool." The Deputy Speaker said such an expression would be entirely out of order, but it had not reached his ears. A division was taken soon afterwards, and when the numbers were announced Biggar complained that as he was going into the lobby Milbank approached him and said, "Biggar, you're a mean, impudent scoundrel." Milbank, called upon by the Deputy Speaker for an explanation, confessed it was true he had used the words. He said that he distinctly saw the lips of the member for Cavan moving, and heard the expression "bloody fool"; and as soon as opportunity offered he crossed the floor and called the hon. member "an impudent scoundrel." "The hon. member having admitted that he used that

expression with reference to another hon. member," said the Deputy Speaker, "it is his duty to apologise, not to the hon. member but to the House." Mr. Milbank did apologise to the House, and hoped the hon. member for Cavan would also be asked to make his excuses. Biggar was heard to mutter something to the effect that he was convinced Milbank was a fool, but that he had neither the time nor the inclination to investigate whether Milbank was not only a fool but a bloody fool. The Deputy Speaker wisely declared the incident to be closed.

The trembling eloquence of A. M. Sullivan, aflame with passion for the righting of wrongs, gave vitality and glow to the long dreary wastes of the night. Frank Hugh O'Donnell made a speech on each and every one of the many motions for adjournment, whether of the debate or of the House. Thomas Sexton spoke from a quarter to five o'clock until twenty minutes to eight. All the other Parnellites then on duty had exhausted their right to speak; and so to Sexton fell the task of filling up the time until the next relay of colleagues arrived. Neither the grey depression of the early morning nor the small audience, nor physical fatigue, had any effect on the amazing fluency and felicity of his oratory. Sexton had a wonderfully fertile mind in ideas and vocabulary—the power to speak for hours on any subject relating to Ireland, consecutively and with force, and to embody what he had to say in

language that showed a sense of words and style. Shaw Lefevre, one of the Liberal Ministers, who sat out the speech, went immediately to Sexton and congratulated him. He said every word was strictly to the purpose. "I do not know whether Sexton is better at figures of rhetoric, or figures of arithmetic," said another English member.

While Sexton was speaking there appeared at the Bar a young man, no more than 24 years of age, in a heavy overcoat, with all the signs of having done a long and hasty journey. This was John Redmond, lately a clerk to the House of Commons, who, the day before, was returned unopposed M.P. for New Ross, and in response to an urgent telegram had travelled all night to Westminster. He was greeted with a shout of welcome by the Parnellites. He was unable to come to their aid, as he could take his seat only at the opening of a sitting. "My very presence, however, brought a sense of encouragement and approaching relief to them," Redmond says in an account of his first appearance in the House as a member; "and I stood there at the Bar with my rough travelling coat still upon me, gazing alternately with indignation and admiration at the amazing scene enacted before me. I shall never forget," he adds, "the appearance the Chamber presented. The floor was littered with paper. A few dishevelled and weary Irishmen on one side of the House; about a hundred infuriated Englishmen upon the other, some of them still in evening dress

and wearing what once were the white shirts of the night before."*

At a quarter to nine on Wednesday morning the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition entered the Chamber together from behind the Speaker's Chair and took their respective places on the Front Benches to the right and left of the table. They looked very grave and, indeed, seemed bewildered by this daring and exceptional display of obstruction by the Irish members. Then a feeling spread around that something was about to happen, something of a startling nature but unknown and unsurmisable; and the Chamber filled rapidly.

Exactly at nine o'clock Mr. Speaker Brand came in and relieved Dr. Lyon Playfair in the Chair. Biggar was speaking at the time. With a gesture of his hand the Speaker directed the member for Cavan to sit down. The Speaker at that great moment of the House of Commons, seemed anything but an ominous or minatory personality. His face had a pained expression, his hands trembled as he opened the roll of manuscript from which he was about to read the historic declaration that on his own initiative he proposed to bring the debate to an end. For this action he had no authority under the Standing Orders, but it subsequently transpired that he had consulted not only the Prime Minister but the Leader of the Opposition, and was promised the support of both in taking upon himself the responsibility of stopping

*"John Redmond," a biographical study by L. G. Redmond-Howard, 1910, pp. 28–9.

the discussion. "The dignity, credit, and authority of the House are seriously threatened," said he, reading his manuscript in slow and solemn tones, "and it is necessary that they should be vindicated." He declared himself satisfied that he should best carry out the will of the House by declining to call upon any more members to speak, and at once putting the question. Thereupon he put the amendment which the Irish members had moved to the motion for leave to bring in the Coercion Bill. The numbers in the division were, for the amendment, 19; against, 164;—majority for the Government, 145.

The Nationalists were taken aback by this sudden and unexpected action of the Speaker. They were resolved upon keeping the House going for the entire week rather than yield. It was obstruction unashamed. So anxious were they to husband their resources that not a single man of their small band was lost by suspension during the prolonged sitting. Parnell had just left the House for a few hours' sleep at the neighbouring Westminster Palace Hotel. Healy rushed away to summon him back. But the Speaker rapidly pursued the course upon which he had entered. After the division on the amendment, he put the question that leave be given to bring in the Bill. Justin McCarthy, as vice-chairman of the Irish Party, was in charge. He got up to open a fresh debate on the new question, as in other circumstances he would have been entitled to do, but he was confronted by the determination of the Speaker to

allow no discussion, backed by an angry roar from the united Ministerialists and Opposition. McCarthy refused to give way. Then rose the tall form of O'Connor Power, his strong jaw twisted with passion, and having with an uplifting motion of his right arm brought his colleagues—twenty in number—to their feet, he started shouting "Privilege! Privilege!" in a deep baying voice, in which all joined in a wild chorus. This demonstration over, the Parnellites in single file, McCarthy leading the way, came down the gangway to the floor, and, as if to show their desire to observe the proprieties, each followed the example of their leader in bowing to the Speaker, before turning to quit the Chamber. Leave to bring in the Bill was granted, and the Chief Secretary presented it, in the usual way, to the Clerk at the Table, amid tumultuous cheers. At half-past nine o'clock the House adjourned, after a continuous sitting of forty-one-and-a-half hours, a record which still remains unbroken.†

The Speaker's *coup d'etat* had been arranged with the approval of the two Front Benches twenty-one hours before it came off. Brand, the Speaker, says in his Diary, he came to the conclusion that it was his duty to extricate the House from its difficulty by closing the debate on his own authority. "I sent for Gladstone on Tuesday (1st February) about noon," he says, "and told him I should be prepared to put the question in spite of obstruction

†"Parliamentary Debates" (third series), Vol. 257, pp. 1748–2038, and the Dublin and London newspapers of the time.

on the following conditions:—(1) That the debate should be carried on until the following morning, my object in this delay being to mark distinctly to the outside world the extraordinary gravity of the situation, and the necessity of the step which I was about to take. (2) That he should reconsider the regulations of business, either by giving more authority to the House or by conferring authority on the Speaker." The Prime Minister agreed to these conditions, and to confirm them summoned a meeting of the Cabinet, which was held in the Speaker's Library at four o'clock that afternoon, while the House was sitting and Brand was in the Chair. "I had communicated, with Gladstone's approval, my intention to close the debate to Northcote, but to no one else except May (Clerk of the House) from whom I received much assistance," Brand continues. Northcote was startled, but expressed no disapproval of the course proposed.‡

These occurrences were followed next day, Thursday, February 3, by others equally violent and unprecedented. When the Irish members left the House shouting "Privilege! privilege!" on Wednesday morning, they walked across to the Party offices in King-street—a small laneway then running off Parliament-street — where, being joined by Parnell and Healy, they discussed the situation. O'Connor Power was for the bold step of going back to Ireland in a body and deciding

‡Extract from the "Diary" of the Speaker, quoted in Morley's "Life of Gladstone," Vol. 3, p. 52.

their further course of action in consultation with their constituencies. Parnell considered that a more dramatic and effective demonstration could be made by returning to the House of Commons, and after a long discussion this opinion prevailed. Accordingly, the Parnellites assembled in full strength on the Thursday. The Government made arrangements for coping with disturbances of a most serious kind. Bodies of police were distributed throughout the building and a force was posted outside in Palace Yard. The House was packed with members; and the strangers' galleries were also thronged.

The trouble began when Gladstone rose to move the adoption of a new Standing Order vesting in the Speaker the power which he had already usurped. John Dillon got up at the same time, and declined to give way either to the angry exclamations of "Chair" and "Order" from the body of members, or the repeated directions of the Speaker to resume his seat. What Dillon proposed to say or do is not indicated in the parliamentary report. He stood with folded arms and set pale face, silent in the midst of the cries with which he was assailed and the supporting cheers of his colleagues. The Speaker "named" him for defying the authority of the Chair; and the motion for his suspension, moved by Gladstone, was carried by 395 votes to 33. Dillon was then called upon to withdraw, but declined to do so. The Sergeant-at-Arms, with three or four of the messengers, went up to him with the intention of

carrying him bodily from the Chamber. "If you employ force I must yield," said Dillon, and he walked out.

Gladstone again rose. He was stopped by Parnell who moved "that the right hon. gentleman be not heard." This was an ancient form of parliamentary procedure which had not been heard of for centuries until Gladstone disinterred it in the previous session to suppress Frank Hugh O'Donnell. The Speaker now refused to accept it from Parnell; and as Parnell continued to insist on its being put he was "named" by the Speaker. "From this instant forward," says the *Parliamentary Debates*, "the business of the House proceeded under indescribable confusion." A division was challenged on the motion of Parnell's suspension. The Irish members kept their seats. Lord Richard Grosvenor, Chief Whip, informed the Speaker that they declined to take part in the division. This was an unheard of breach of order. The Speaker warned them of the consequences. "We remain in our places as a protest against the illegality of the proceedings," exclaimed A. M. Sullivan. The division was, however, proceeded with, 405 voting for Parnell's expulsion, and 7 against—five Irish members and two English, Joseph Cowan and Henry Labouchere. The Speaker directed Parnell to withdraw. "Sir," he replied, "I respectfully refuse to withdraw unless I am compelled to do so by superior force." The Sergeant-at-Arms laid his hand on Parnell's

shoulder; and at the touch, Parnell rose and left the House, loudly cheered by his followers.

All the other Irish members present were suspended for not having voted in the division. There were thirty-five of them, and in each case the same form was followed. Each declined voluntarily to withdraw, and was conducted to the door by the Sergeant-at-Arms and his messengers.

CHAPTER XII.

"THE BANSHEE'S KISS."

It has been asserted, in flat contradiction of an old saying, that history never repeats itself. Whatever history may do, or not do, elsewhere, it certainly often plagiarizes itself in Irish political affairs.

In the House of Commons, during the session of 1884—to give one instance—there occurred an Irish scene which exactly resembled in all respects one that happened, ten years before, in the session of 1874. Both tended to the same end or result. Even the principal figure in each incident was the same, though the parts he played were entirely different. In 1884, as in 1874, a distinguished Nationalist member rose in the Irish quarter, below the gangway on the Opposition side—a big, loosely-jointed man, with a swarthy pock-marked face, a slightly curved nose, firm mouth, and determined jaw, and a moustache and side-whiskers. He suggested not only massive physical strength but intellectuality also—a man of strongly held opinions, and, in disposition, resolute and combative. As he spoke, the impressiveness of his deep voice, with its modulated cadences, enamoured the ear of the crowded House, and his words, so eloquently argumentative, swayed its mind. This was O'Connor Power, member for Mayo. But

whereas in 1874 he was defending the Party against the attack of one whom he stigmatised a deserter —The O'Donoghue; in 1884 he was accusing the Party of extreme and unwise courses, as The O'Donoghue had done in 1874, and for this he was himself being denounced as a renegade.

This strange turn in affairs had been led up to by very remarkable developments in the Nationalist Movement, since the parliamentary demonstration against coercion in 1881 (described in the preceding chapter), by notable legislative gains, and by events the most tragic. Gladstone brought in a great measure of land reform. Every tenant-farmer was to get fixity of tenure. The landlord was to be deprived of his right to settle his own rents. Fair rents were to be fixed by a judicial court, and under a provision which T. M. Healy succeeded in getting inserted in the Bill in committee—hence known as the "Healy clause"—a sum equivalent to the value of the occupier's improvements was to be deducted. A more splendid vindication of the Land League could hardly be conceived. Did not Gladstone declare, years afterwards, that the Land Act of 1881 would have been impossible but for the Land League agitation? In that agrarian revolt excesses were committed by the peasantry and wrongs were done by the landlords. Both classes are entitled to pity rather than condemnation. They were equally victims of cruel circumstances over the shaping of which neither of them had had any control. But if they are to be weighed in the balance the scale will be

found to dip low on the side of the peasantry, for they suffered more and longer. Gladstone recognised that; and, accordingly, here was a measure that emancipated the tenant-farmers from the thraldom of the past. Parnell, however, was not truly thankful. It was a far better Bill than many of his followers expected. Yet he induced them, by a threat that if they did not obey he would resign, to vote against the second reading. More than that, he insisted that the rent-fixing tribunals should be first tested by special cases selected by the Land League. Gladstone, and Forster, the Chief Secretary, came to the conclusion that Parnell's purpose was to thwart, for his own political ends, the healing influences of the measure. So, in October, 1881, they put him into Kilmainham Jail, as a "suspect" under the Coercion Act, with his chief parliamentary lieutenants, and hundreds of his leading supporters, and proclaimed the Land League as an illegal association.

Towards the end of April, 1882, a remarkable transmutation took place in the relations between the Government and the Parnellites. What is known as the "Kilmainham Treaty" was arranged informally between them, the negotiators being Captain O'Shea, the representative of Clare, and Joseph Chamberlain, a member of the Government. Parnell said in a letter written to O'Shea that if arrears of rent in certain classes of holdings were cancelled by payment of a sum to the landlords out of the surplus fund left after the dis-

establishment of the Irish Church, the exertions of the Irish Party in stopping outrages and intimidation would be effective, and furthermore they would be enabled cordially to co-operate with the Liberal Party in forwarding Liberal principles. The Cabinet would not give any pledge, but Gladstone decided—to use his own phrase—that "conciliation is to replace coercion." Parnell and the other "suspects" were released; the doors of Dartmoor prison were opened to Michael Davitt. Forster resigned the Chief Secretaryship. Lord Frederic Cavendish, son of the Duke of Devonshire and brother of Lord Hartington, was appointed to carry out the new policy. In the afternoon of the very day he entered Dublin he fell, with his Under-Secretary, Thomas Burke, stabbed to death by the Invincibles (a body for the assassination of Government officials) as they were walking home together through the Phœnix Park; and there were soon afterwards dynamite explosions in London railway stations and at Government offices. The dynamitards and the Invincibles had come to the conclusion that Ireland was to be saved only by the dagger and the bomb.*

On O'Connor Power these events had a restraining influence. He was the only member of Parliament present at the demonstration at Irishtown, county Mayo, on Sunday, April 19, 1879, at which the banner of the Land League, inscribed with Davitt's agrarian principles, was unfurled, though

*John Daly, of Limerick, was sentenced to penal servitude for life in connection with the dynamite conspiracy.

Davitt himself was not present, owing to the mischance of missing his train.† O'Connor Power did not however make a Land League speech, nor did he join the Land League, when it was subsequently formed. There was no disillusionment on his part. He did not abandon Home Rule, nor did he repent of his early Fenianism, but he was for moderate courses now. He deplored especially the unrelieved strain of extreme political agitation which left neither the time nor the mood for the amelioration of pressing economic grievances. He supported the Land Act. He formulated a scheme of migration from the congested districts to the pasture plains, by which the most crowded and poorest places would be relieved, and plains that supported only cattle be made to provide a freer and fuller life for men.‡ He had other legislative measures in contemplation for promoting Ireland's resources and industries. In a word, he was for the observance of the "Kilmainham Treaty." With all this, a sense of estrangement between him and his colleagues set in; and it grew and grew in bitterness until he was denounced to his constituents at public meetings, and finally, in 1884, he was driven to secession from the Party.

O'Connor Power, like most strong-willed Irish-

†This historic meeting received scant notice in the Dublin daily and weekly Press; but the speeches are fully reported in the "Connaught Telegraph" of Saturday, April 21, 1879, a newspaper owned and edited by James Daly of Castlebar, who presided.

‡The scheme was adopted about ten years later by Arthur James Balfour, Chief Secretary, when the Congested Board was established to carry it out.

men, when met by opposition, had the Irish weakness of retaliation, the passion to reply in terms of personal abuse, all the more unmeasured because the opponents were once fast comrades. So on February 20, 1884, speaking from the Irish benches in the House of Commons, he told the Nationalists who surrounded him, that, in the language of Edmund Burke, they were "a species of men to whom a state of order would become a sentence of obscurity," while they indulged—as was their custom on such occasions—in unrestrained ironical cheers and mocking laughter. O'Connor Power had helped to overthrow Butt. The ablest and most crushing onslaught made on Butt, and his policy of moderation and conciliation, was a letter, three colums long, addressed by O'Connor Power to the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain in December, 1878. "The whirligig of time brings in his revenges" as Shakespeare says; and in no arena of human activity more so than in Irish politics. Here was O'Connor Power now making a forcible and impressive speech that was animated through and through by the spirit of Butt. He declared that he saw a real disposition in English politicians to consider the claims of Ireland and to make concessions to her legitimate demands. In saying this he was supported by the deep-toned "hear, hear" of Gladstone sitting on the Treasury Bench. His peroration was as follows:—

"Notwithstanding all that has been done to embitter this struggle, I am convinced that many of us will live to see this strife brought to a close;

and that we shall see it succeeded by a real and permanent union—a union such as Grattan and O'Connell contemplated who, yielding to none in the warmth of their Irish sympathies and in the intensity of their Irish nationalism, were still loyal to the union and integrity of the Empire. I believe that we shall have a union of equal laws and equal liberties, a union based on National right and Imperial integrity, a state of prosperity and tranquillity in Ireland, in which the Irish industry that has built up flourishing cities across the waters of the Atlantic shall be fully occupied in the development of Irish resources, in which Irish intellect, that has been so successful in Colonial Governments and Parliaments, shall be devoted to the councils of the Irish nation, and in which Irish courage that has never wavered on any field in the darkest hour of defeat, or the brightest moment of victory, shall be the proud defence of free institutions at home, and the unassailable bulwark of the social order without which no civilised community would be either happy or free."

The peroration was listened to in that perfect stillness which prevails in the House of Commons only on occasions when an orator of the front rank has arrested its attention. Then loud and prolonged applause burst forth, and before it had died away T. M. Healy was seen on his legs. The House at once settled down to listen to a retort which it knew, from its experience of Healy, would be clever, effective, embittered, and also very amusing to everyone but its victim. Those who glance

through the *Parliamentary Debates* between 1880 and 1918 will find its pages flashing with many a string of jewels—emeralds, they may be called perhaps, because of their Celtic colour—after the name, "Mr. T. M. Healy." The retort, this time, took a wholly original turn. Healy went back to the past for his material—the past which O'Connor Power had said should be forgotten. He recalled that O'Connor Power, ten years previously, had denounced The O'Donoghue as a "recreant" and to account for his recreancy had quoted The O'Donoghue's own description of "the fallen patriot," with the stinging suggestion that he had come to be the same miserable thing—a place-hunter, so hateful in Irish memories. Sitting on the benches opposite, among the Liberals, was a distinguished-looking man who had led the approving cheers of the Ministerialists during O'Connor Power's speech. It was noticed that he moved as uneasily in his seat as O'Connor Power did in his, when Healy commenced reading the extracts from the *Parliamentary Debates*. It was The O'Donoghue, still member for Tralee, and still a Liberal. He looked across at O'Connor Power and O'Connor Power looked across at him. How poignant must have been the thoughts of both on finding themselves together in the same boat after shipwreck and listening to the familiar passages about "the fallen patriot" read once more to a heartlessly delighted House of Commons! "I think," said Healy, "that after that quotation, I

may leave the member for Mayo to his own reflections."‖

In the following year, 1885, there was a General Election; and O'Connor Power completed his secession from the ranks of the Parnellites by standing as a Liberal candidate for a London constituency—the Kennington division of Lambeth. Just as his Nationalist meetings in Scotland, in 1877, were broken up by the Fenians, so his Liberal meetings at Kennington, in 1885, were turned into disorder by the Parnellites. He was beaten at the polls. And that was the end, practically, of the political life of O'Connor Power. What a remarkable career was his! In its personal aspect, starting as a poor lad at Rochdale, struggling to make ends meet by working in summer as a painter and in winter as a mill-hand; and attaining to so high a position in the House of Commons that he stood with Disraeli, Gladstone and Bright for oratory. Politically, beginning as an Irish Fenian and ending as a British Liberal!

O'Connor Power was above the suspicion of interested motives. He sacrificed what a little complaisance to Parnell would have made a safe seat of county Mayo. For his personal antagonism to the Irish leader had as much to do with his fall as his change of opinion—or, rather, the advocacy of different tactics for the advancement of the common cause. At the same time, another distinguished member of the Irish Party disappeared

‖ "Parliamentary Debates," Vol. 284 (third series), pp. 1465–1482.

—Frank Hugh O'Donnell. He, like O'Connor Power, had objected strongly to the agrarian question being given pride of place before the national ideal. Along with that, he was so full of theories and crotchets, and so self-opinionated, that he irritated his colleagues. Even Forster, the Chief Secretary, saw through his weakness. "It would be impossible," he said one night in the House of Commons, "to find a body of men with whom the hon. member for Dungarvan could agree." Healy, with his knack of inventing appropriate nicknames, called him "Crank Hugh O'Donnell." Yet how sad it is to think of two men of such brilliant parts, as O'Connor Power and O'Donnell, each sincerely devoted to Ireland, being snuffed out in such a fashion. But their fate, after all, was but that of many others like them who took what William O'Brien finely called, "The Banshee's Kiss."

That fascinating speaker, P. J. Smyth—none more so in the House of Commons—also fell into disfavour.§ In December, 1884, he was appointed Secretary to the Loan Fund Board for Ireland at a salary of about £300 a year. This closed his public career. T. D. Sullivan said "He exchanged his seat for Tipperary for a stool in Dublin Castle." Well, he was in very poor circumstances—if that be any excuse. He passed away just three weeks afterwards, qn January 12, 1885.

§One of the most brilliant speeches ever heard in the House of Commons was that made by Smyth in 1876 advocating the substitution of Repeal for Home Rule.

The bright and ardent spirit of A. M. Sullivan had already been prematurely quenched by death in 1883. At the General Election of 1885, after the establishment of the household franchise throughout Ireland, The O'Donoghue was rejected; also the mellifluous Sir Patrick O'Brien, the sagacious William Shaw, the practical Mitchell Henry, the eloquent Blennerhassett—all affording additional instances of how the service of Ireland involved much personal suffering and sacrifice.

Nevertheless, there has always been a rush to fill the places of the fallen. "The Banshee's Kiss" may be fatal, but it is ever alluring. At the General Election of 1885, eighty-three Parnellites were returned, mainly farmers and shopkeepers, popular local men. In *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*, each, without exception, described himself as "An Irish Nationalist." They were doubly pledged—to sit, act and vote together, and to accept no office from the Government until Home Rule was passed. That, at the moment, appeared to be very close at hand. Gladstone adopted Home Rule. He had come to recognise that all the tests which statesmanship had provided for ascertaining the will of the people showed that Ireland wanted a national government. Great was the exultation of the Parnellites. But it was short-lived. The new House of Commons in 1886 threw out the Bill. It was as if a door was unexpectedly opened through which Ireland caught sight of the long-promised Dawn, only to be quickly shut in again in gloom.

Chapter XIII.

COERCION, AND A CLASH OF TEMPERAMENTS.

The rejection of the Home Rule Bill of 1886, caused sore disappointment in Ireland. There was also exasperation. To that was added defiance when it became known that Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister of the first Unionist Government, had declared that the true physic for Ireland's mind disease was "twenty years of resolute Government"; and that he had found the man to carry out that policy, as Chief Secretary, in his nephew—his sister's son—Arthur James Balfour. Ireland also found her man.

Some debilitating influence fell upon Parnell after his release from Kilmainham Jail in 1882. He was a changed man. He withdrew himself from the conspicuous position which he filled in public life. This tendency became more marked after the adoption of Home Rule by the Liberals. He rarely spoke in Parliament, and not at all in Ireland, but when he did speak he was all for moderation and conciliation. His long disappearances had the result of enveloping him still more in a veil of mystery. In those years hardly one of his colleagues can be said to have been intimate with him; and he, on his part, did not know, even

by sight, several of the new members returned to fight under his standard at the General Election of 1886.

The man whom Ireland found in this emergency was that very remarkable personality, William O'Brien. He inspired and directed the Irish Nationalist Movement, agrarian and political, for the four stirring years 1886–1890. He was acknowledged leader because of his ability, his passionate earnestness, his soaring faith in his cause. In a popular ballad addressed to "Tipperary," and depicting her attitude towards the enemies of Ireland that gallant county is told—

You've a hand for the grasp of friendship, another to make them quake,
And they're welcome to whichsoever it pleases them more to take.

These lines symbolised the career and the policy of O'Brien. In the peculiar circumstances of Irish public life, great successes have always been the reward of deeds of self-assertion and daring. O'Brien achieved greatness because he dared, without any thought of the risk involved to himself. He dared, when in the early 'eighties, during a strike of the Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police, he planned to electrify the people and stupify the Government by taking Dublin Castle by force of arms, himself leading the Fenians in the attack, with the object of carrying the Viceroy, Lord Spencer, and the

Chief Secretary, Forster, as hostages to the mountains; and he would have acted upon it, had not Parnell—whom he thought it right to consult—discouraged the enterprise. He dared just as much years afterwards when, as he thought, the hour auspicious of reconciliation having come, he promptly held out the olive branch to the landlords, and brought about a conference which led to the great land purchase scheme, and was within an ace of settling the national question also, had not the evil genius of the country—working, this time, mainly through political short-sightedness and, perhaps, political jealousies of other leading Nationalists—brought his policy of "Conference, Conciliation and Consent" to ruin.

O'Brien had been five years in political life before 1886. He was born in Mallow, county Cork, in 1852. His father was managing clerk for a local solicitor. He was educated at the Cloyne Diocesan College, the headmaster of which was Dr. Croke, afterwards celebrated as Archbishop of Cashel. At at early age he removed to the city of Cork, and got employment as a reporter on the *Daily Herald*. He attended Queen's College, where he learned Latin, French, German and Italian, and a wide knowledge of literature, ancient and modern. At this time the Fenian organization was being revived after the collapse of its insurrection in 1867. Young O'Brien joined it. He was appointed secretary to the Province of Munster, and in that capacity was the medium of communication between the county centres in the

province and that unknown body, the Supreme Council in Dublin. In 1870 an assembly of delegates of the organization, representative of all Ireland, and convened by O'Connor Power, met secretly in Cork. O'Brien acted as clerk of this revolutionary parliament.

In 1875 O'Brien obtained a post on the *Freeman's Journal* in Dublin. His graphic descriptions of scenes and incidents of the agrarian campaign in the later 'Seventies were the finest things of the kind in Irish journalism. But the paper with which his name is more closely associated is *United Ireland*, the weekly organ of the Land League. It was founded by Parnell in the room of *The Irishman*, which was bought from Richard Pigott and discontinued. O'Brien was appointed editor, and its first number appeared on August 13, 1881. It is doubtful whether any country ever produced a more ably militant political journal than *United Ireland*. The story is told that when Forster, the Chief Secretary, sitting in his room in Dublin Castle, sorely perplexed by the difficulties of his position, read the first number, he cried out in his agony—"Good Lord, who on earth is this new madman?"

Within a few months Forster suppressed *United Ireland* and locked up its editor in Kilmainham Jail, with Parnell and other Land League leaders. O'Brien devoted his first hours in prison to writing at Parnell's request, with the stump of a pencil on the back of a pink telegram form, the "No Rent Manifesto." The document was smuggled out of

prison and read next day at the meeting of the central branch of the Land League in Dublin. It was this revolutionary appeal to the farmers to pay no rent until the land question was settled which led to the proclamation of the Land League as an unlawful association. But soon Gladstone, as we have seen, threw over Forster, released the prisoners, and *United Ireland* was revived. In 1883 O'Brien was returned to Parliament for Mallow, his native town, beating Naish, the Irish Solicitor-General of the Liberal Administration.

William O'Brien was thirty-four years of age when in the winter of 1886, in answer to the pronouncement of the first Unionist Government that they would stand no nonsense from Ireland, he started the Plan of Campaign. The principle of the Plan, which was devised by Timothy Harrington, the secretary of the National League, was combination among the tenants for the protection of their common interests. If a landlord refused to give an abatement in the rents, the tenants of the estate decided among themselves what reduction they thought justly due—usually 15 or 20 per cent. —and then paid their rents, less this abatement, to a Member of Parliament, as receiver, who held the money in trust for the landlord until he came to terms, or, if the landlord resorted to eviction, had it used for the defence of the tenants. In the working of the Plan, O'Brien had John Dillon as his chief comrade-in-arms in Ireland, and T. M. Healy and Sexton as his chief lieutenants in the House of Commons. In February, 1887, the Plan

was declared to be illegal by the Irish Court of Appeal. Accordingly a supreme task was laid upon O'Brien in the rallying of the country to the support of his policy of—"No Reduction, No Rent."

The personal appearance of O'Brien, at the time of which I write, was an index both of his character and career—restless, fierce, fanatic, ready to give his life, as he was giving his life's work, to bring down landlordism and British rule in Ireland. He was tall in form, with shoulders slightly stooped. The features were long and sharp; and the eyes, blue, and deep-set, had a flash in them that the heavy spectacles, worn as an aid to their imperfect sight, could not subdue. A fine head with plenty of dark tousled hair, and a beard, short and untrimmed, set off the face which was lit up with the light of the enthusiast. O'Brien was a man of considerable nervous and spiritual force. For rousing popular passion at a public meeting he was greatest among the Irish leaders. He swayed the crowd as the trees of a wood are swayed by the storm. He was alternately menacing, mournful, prophetic, gentle and appealing. As he spoke he trembled from head to foot, and panted under the stress of his oratorical outburst. He indulged in the wildest gestures of face, hands and arms; and the tones of his voice ranged from a piercing shriek, when he was scornful and denunciatory, to a soft murmurous whisper when he indulged in passages of tender pathos and the dreamy musings of his poetic imagination. I

remember well, as a reporter for the *Freeman's Journal,* attending Plan of Campaign meetings, how difficult I found it to transfer his passion, invective and imagery, through the hieroglyphics of shorthand, to my note-book, so attracted was I by the magnetic nature of the man, and so great was the whirl into which the sweep and sway of his eloquence put my mind.

To cope with such a powerful and compelling personality, at the head of a movement declared to be illegal, a Chief Secretary of an unusually strong type was needed. The news that Arthur James Balfour had been appointed caused a gasp of stupefaction in the Unionist Party. "Clara" —as Balfour was known at the university for his supposed feminine qualities—Chief Secretary! Ireland before his time, and after, was the grave of most promising political reputations. The problem had broken that rugged and iron-nerved man, W. E. Forster, who was so appropriately called "Buckshot." The sensitive and sympathetic Sir George Trevelyan, who succeeded the murdered Lord Frederic Cavendish, had been driven to despair. His hair grew white, not from years, but as men's have grown from sudden fears. In later years the record of personal disaster was continued. The brilliant promise of George Wyndham, who having settled the land question in 1903, in co-operation, it is interesting to note, with William O'Brien, hoped also, with the same help, to settle the national question, ended in the eclipse of failure and death. Augustine Birrell,

who had every reason to expect to see Home Rule established, and be remembered as the last of the Chief Secretaries, went out in 1916, with his ambitions unrealised, in the blood and fire of a rebellion. Surely, then, Balfour had got a position far too big for him.

The Nationalist Party hailed the advent of the new Chief Secretary with a loud burst of mocking laughter. All they knew of him was that he was that tall, slim, slack and willowy young man, slow and indolent of movement, whom they had noticed among Ministers on the Treasury Bench in a sprawling attitude, his head resting on the back of the bench, his hands in his trousers' pockets, with glimpses of his boots resting on the table, and, as a final touch, showing a scented handkerchief in the breast-pocket of his frock-coat. That "hot-house flower"; that "scented popinjay"—as they contemptuously called him—Chief Secretary! They vowed to make short work of him, to break him, as they had broken his predecessors in office.

Balfour was not long in proving to the House generally, and even to his own colleagues in the Ministry, as well as to the Irish Party, that they were all entirely wrong in their estimate of him as a weakling. In fact, the new Chief Secretary's reputation as a strong and able man burst out into a flame, with a suddenness and a flare, unprecedented in the history of the House of Commons. In 1887 he carried the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, perhaps the most drastic of the long role of

Irish coercion measures on the Statute Book. He followed this up by proclaiming the National League, which had been constituted in succession to the suppressed Land League. Coupled with this rule of the strong hand in Ireland was an exhibition of high disdain for the opposition of the Irish Party in the House of Commons. Balfour, from the first, deliberately set himself out to meet the most violent attacks of the Irish members with indifference, or to answer them back with satire and scorn. Adverse criticism they received with mocking laughter, but ridicule threw them into a rage.

In the late summer of 1887, O'Brien was put into Tullamore Jail for six months. He refused to wear the prison dress, and, having been deprived of his own clothes, lay for weeks in bed. One morning, when his cell was opened, he was discovered, to the mingled astonishment and consternation of the governor of the prison, dressed in a well-cut suit of the best Irish tweed! The clothes were brought in by one of the warders wearing them under his uniform.

On his release, O'Brien went at once to Westminster "to meet," as he said, "Balfour face to face in the House of Commons." The encounter was most dramatic. O'Brien received a great ovation as he appeared through the swing-doors, under the clock, that afternoon of February 16, 1888, wearing his prison suit of Irish tweed, and walked to his place with a long, nervous stride, his head slightly turned to one side, and his eyes

cast down, as usual, as if he were introspectively working out some bold scheme for the glory of Ireland and the discomfiture of her enemies. His speech, delivered from the second bench below the gangway, in the Irish quarter, was a tremendous philippic. At first, his voice was very low, and he seemed to be physically in the last stage of exhaustion. Soon, however, he swept down upon the Chief Secretary with a rush and a roar. O'Brien's oratory was unique in the House of Commons. Nothing like it was ever heard and seen before. This particular speech was comparable only to a whirlwind, storming and raging, with a fire at its centre, flaring, cracking, sparkling, in which one saw alternately red ruin and disaster, poetic fancies, noble visions. A spell seemed to be cast over the crowded Assembly. Conservative members sat silent, for the most part, listening intently, somewhat puzzled, or feeling that they were being pushed to the wall and left nothing to say. Balfour was to be seen on the Treasury Bench, in a drooping attitude, deeply interested in the speech, but yet provokingly cool and smiling, just as if he were a detached listener in the Strangers' Gallery.

O'Brien closed his speech by contending that Balfour's coercive policy had done much to advance the nationalist cause by attracting to it the humane sympathy of the English masses. And what was the result in Ireland? "Wherever the name of England is uttered now in an Irish crowd, it is uttered no longer in hatred; it is uttered with

hope—aye, it is uttered with gratitude to those awakening British masses, those honest British toilers, who have never authorised this barbaric brutality in Ireland." "We believe in them, and are content to wait," O'Brien continued. Then pointing to the Ministers on the Treasury Bench he cried out—"You are the Separatists to-day. We are for peace and for the brotherhood and happiness of the two nations. If you are for eternal repression and eternal discord, and eternal misery for you as well as for us, we are for appeasing the dark passions of the past."

When O'Brien had finished and sat down, the House naturally expected that the Chief Secretary would follow. To the general surprise, Balfour simply resettled himself in a different lackadaisical lounge on the Treasury Bench. The Nationalists made the Chamber ring with angry shouts of "Balfour, Balfour," but Balfour did not respond, and when they added "coward," "funker," he smiled with all the more exasperating irony. Next day, however, he replied. Standing at the table, obviously very much at ease with himself, he protested that O'Brien's attack did not seem to him at all violent. After all, everything went by comparison. He had been told in *United Ireland* that he "lusted for slaughter with eunuchised imagination," that to his "languid life human suffering imparts a delicious sensation." But on looking through earlier numbers of that newspaper he found it had been said of his predecessor Trevelyan, the Liberal, that "if Nature had denied

to him the resources of the skunk and the cuttle-fish, she had enabled him to supply their place." How, he asked—while the Irish benches were seething with uproar—could he be expected to feel charges, couched by the member for Mallow in parliamentary forms, so acutely as might be expected by persons unaccustomed to the hon. gentleman's ordinary standards of vituperation? Gladstone, who spoke afterwards, was indignant at this "exhibition of frivolity," as he regarded the speech of the Chief Secretary. What had really happened was that the supposed "lisping hawthorn bud," turned out to be a "tiger lily."

So the conflict went on for three years. It was marked in the House of Commons by frequent scenes of the wildest disorder. Its incidents in Ireland were imprisonments, dragoonings, bludgeonings, evictions, suppression of meetings, and even the shooting down of individuals. Many of the Nationalist M.P.'s were sent to jail by courts consisting only of two Resident Magistrates who were really nothing more than instruments of the Executive. In prison, the representatives of the people were subjected to petty, yet odious, forms of humiliation. But the brunt of the fight against coercion, its terrible responsibilities and its bitter sufferings, were divided between William O'Brien and John Dillon.

Dillon was tall and so gaunt that his clothes always hung loosely round him. The face was oval in shape, and olive in tint. The hair and beard had the blue-black tinge of a raven's wing.

The eyes were large, dark and melancholy. At this very time, 1887, George Meredith, poet and novelist, wrote—as may be seen in his "Letters"—from Box Hill, Dorking, to a friend—" Haldane, the member for East Lothian, brings down Dillon on a second visit to me next Sunday week. You are an artist. I should like you to see and study Dillon's eyes. They are the most beautiful I have ever beheld in a head—clear, deep wells, with honesty at bottom." In manners, Dillon was polished, but reserved, and far from free. He had none of William O'Brien's mercurial temperament and overflowing charm of manner. O'Brien to his familiars was the most jovial and lovable of men. Nor had Dillon anything of the varied and sparkling conversational powers of O'Brien. He talked little in company, and rarely on subjects outside the range of politics. Meredith noticed this. " It must be admitted," he says in the letter from which I have already quoted, " that he had no theme save the political." Dillon, however, was a very effective debater. His habitual cold reserve disappeared when he spoke. Next to O'Brien, he, of all the Irish members, was the most passionate. And a striking figure he made, when with his tall form thrown forward, his eyes lighting up his grave set face, a recalcitrant lock of his black hair over his forehead, he hurled forth, in his shrill, piercing voice, an eloquent denunciation of the iniquity of Balfour in Ireland.

Meredith, in another letter to the same friend, says, " Dillon would not at first visit an English

house, but since he came to know the English he has humanised to real brotherhood." The "Union of Hearts" had been established by Gladstone; Ireland and England, because of Balfour's repressive measures, were for the first time united in amity which, it was thought, would soon be sealed for ever by the granting of Home Rule. Unknown to anybody, Ireland at that very time was under the shadow of a tragic fate.

CHAPTER XIV.

KATHERINE O'SHEA MEETS THE UNCROWNED KING.

New Palace Yard, the forecourt of the House of Commons, was the scene, one afternoon in July, 1880, of what may truly be described as one of the most momentous political events of the nineteenth century. Yet it seemed quite an ordinary affair. Parnell emerged from the House of Commons, in response to a note handed to him by an attendant, which intimated that a lady, the wife of one of his parliamentary colleagues, would like to see him, and he found her and her sister awaiting him outside. Thus did Mrs. Katherine O'Shea, wife of Captain O'Shea, then member for Clare, satisfy her curiosity to meet that mysterious and unaccountable person, popularly known as "The uncrowned King of Ireland," who had declined her invitations to dinner.

At the very first glance they exchanged they set fire to one another. That glance led them close on ten years afterwards to the divorce court, which, in its turn, was the prelude to a political catastrophe, the most dramatic in the history of the United Kingdom. A powerful leader was overthrown. His Party—the finest masterpiece of disciplined combination ever seen in the House of

Commons—was disrupted. The solidarity of the Irish race, not only in Ireland and Great Britain, but in the Dominions and the United States—never before more united in the Nationalist cause—was shivered into a thousand pieces.

Until then, Parnell was untroubled about woman. An old parish priest who was at Arklow, near Avondale, in the years of Parnell's young manhood, told me that he never heard even a whisper of sexual looseness in regard to him. In the course of his early political career he met hundreds of lovely girls over whom his fame and appearance cast a spell. He attached himself to none. Ah, the pitiable waywardness and perversity of things, that the one woman in all the immensity of creation to attract this rare and strong nature, should have been the wife of another man!

When Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea first met he was 34 and she was about the same age. She had been married thirteen years, and was living with her son and daughters at Wonerash Lodge, Eltham, about eight miles from London, south of the Thames. Captain O'Shea was born in 1840, the son of the Clerk of the Peace for county Limerick, and was educated at the Catholic College, Oscott, Birmingham. He retired from the 18th Hussars with the rank of Captain in 1862. In 1880 he was connected with a banking business at Madrid, which required him to be a good deal abroad; and as differences had arisen between him and his wife —though there was no actual separation—he

resided in a Victoria-street flat when in London for the parliamentary session. Mrs. O'Shea was the youngest daughter of Sir John Page Wood, baronet, River Hall Place, Essex, an Episcopalian clergyman; and she had a brother who was a very distinguished soldier, Field-Marshal Sir Evelyn Wood. Though she cannot be described as a beautiful or stately woman, she had, like Parnell, the quality of uncommonness—being rare and exceptional in type—was highly intellectual and had a most vivacious and winning manner. In figure she was under the medium height and plump; a brunette, her face was small and round, with full cheeks; and with her hair thick but short and curling over her merry eyes, she suggested, despite her age, a high-spirited and romping girl.

Mrs. O'Shea was a woman of means and expectations. She had a rich aunt, Mrs. Wood, who also lived at Eltham and treated her as her favourite niece. During the first session of the new parliament of 1880, Captain O'Shea asked his wife to give political dinners to meet some of his colleagues. She gave several at Thomas's Hotel in Berkeley-square. Parnell was invited to them all, but never came. At one of the dinners, Justin McCarthy and Colonel Nolan assured her "the vacant chair" at the table would never be filled, as they were aware that Parnell ignored the invitations of even the most important political hostesses. In fact, he never appeared in society. He was not even a member of a club. He used to say he always felt out of place and uncomfortable in English

company. While in London he usually occupied the same cheap bachelor lodgings at 16, Keppel-street, off Gower-street, Bloomsbury. Even with his colleagues he mixed very little socially beyond dining at the House of Commons with a few of his favourites, and inviting them occasionally in the autumn to stay with him at his shooting lodge, Aughavannah, in the Wicklow hills. "I became determined," Mrs. O'Shea says, on being told at the dinner of Parnell's reserved habits, "that I would get Parnell to come, and I said, amid laughter and applause—'The uncrowned King of Ireland shall sit in that chair at the next dinner I give.'"

So on that afternoon in July, 1880, Mrs. O'Shea drove to the House of Commons, accompanied by her sister, Mrs. Steele, and sent in a card to Parnell asking him to come out to speak with them in Palace Yard. "He came out," she writes, "a tall, gaunt figure, thin and deadly pale. He looked straight at me smiling, and his curiously burning eyes looked into mine with a wonderful intentness, and threw into my brain the sudden thought, 'This man is wonderful—and different.'" She adds—"The depth of expression and sudden fire of his eyes held me to the day of his death." She asked him why he had not answered her last invitation to dinner. He replied that he had not opened his letters for days, and promised he would certainly come this time to her party. "I leaned forward in the cab to say good-bye, and a rose I was wearing in my bodice fell out on to my skirt.

He took it up and, touching it lightly with his lips, placed it in his button-hole. This rose I found many years afterwards bound up in an envelope, with my name and the date, among his most private papers, and when he died I laid it upon his heart."*

The acquaintance thus formed quickly ripened into the closest friendship and as quickly into love. In September, 1880, after the rising of Parliament, Parnell wrote from Avondale to "my dear Mrs. O'Shea," saying that for the first time in his life he had returned to Ireland with regret because of "the absence of a certain kind and fair face." Just a year later, in October, 1881, when he was confined in Kilmainham prison as a "suspect" under Forster's Coercion Act, he was addressing her as "my own darling wife"; "my dearest little wife"; "my beautiful Queenie"; and subscribing himself, "always your King." And this was nine years before the divorce. In February, 1882, while Parnell was still in jail, a daughter was born to them. She lived only two months, and was buried in the Catholic churchyard at Chislehurst, near Eltham. "Often as we drove past on our way home through the summer evenings," Mrs. Parnell writes, "Parnell would go in and scatter the wild flowers he had gathered for me over little Sophie's resting-place."†

Mrs. Parnell also mentions that while she was still Mrs. O'Shea, she often warned Parnell that

*Katherine Parnell, "Charles Stewart Parnell—His Love Story and Political Life" (1914), Vol. 1, pp. 135–6.

†"Charles Stewart Parnell," Vol. 1, p. 247.

their relations endangered his position as Irish leader; but his reply always was—"My public life is my country's; my private life is my own." He was afraid, however, that if the secret should be disclosed in the divorce court before an Irish Parliament were set up, "these hypocrites"—referring to the English Nonconformists—would rise against him and give a set-back to his cause. "If Home Rule were only carried," he would say to Mrs. O'Shea, "we could laugh in the face of the world."

That Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea were living as husband and wife was suspected, and indeed, was to some extent known for years in political circles both in Ireland and England. Mrs. O'Shea disclaims ever having been "a political lady," and says that, apart from Parnell, she never felt the slightest interest in politics, either Irish or English. But in June, 1882, a month after the Phœnix Park murders, she wrote to Gladstone, by Parnell's direction, asking if he would meet her at Thomas's Hotel, Berkeley-square, as she was in a position to act as intermediary between him and Parnell. Gladstone agreed, being of opinion that it would be a considerable convenience to the Government to have private and amicable communication with Parnell, and the first of several meetings immediately took place. "And may I say here," writes Mrs. Parnell, "that Mr. Gladstone, with all the perfect courtesy of which, when he chose, he was past-master, knew before the conclusion of our interview, and allowed me to know

that he knew, what I desired he should know—that my personal interest in Parnell was my only interest in Irish politics." In Ireland, on the other hand, the matter was pushed into the background, as something ugly and disquieting, in the hope that it would never come into the light of day.

The petition for the divorce was not served until the opening of the year 1890. Mrs. Parnell says that Parnell from the first decided not to enter a defence, much against her wishes, as she could prove desertion, at least; but he was anxious for a divorce so that they might marry. She also says that when, after the verdict, she received a copy of the "decree nisi" dissolving her marriage with O'Shea, both Parnell and she were very happy, and he declared he would have the document framed.‡ Nevertheless, during the long interval between the service of the petition and the trial, Parnell privately assured both Michael Davitt and John Morley that there need be not the slightest uneasiness as to the result. "I am going to get out of this," he said, "without the slightest stain on my name or reputation." How can this attitude—so strange in the light of Mrs. Parnell's disclosures in the biography of her husband—be explained? It is suggested that Parnell may have hoped that political pressure would be brought to bear on Captain O'Shea, probably by the Liberals, not to proceed with the action, or else that Captain O'Shea would be afraid to face exposure, should

‡"Charles Stewart Parnell," Vol. 2, p. 161.

a defence be entered. Parnell may have been influenced by these expectations, but the conclusion I have come to from a close study of the man, is that he did not think himself in the slightest degree blameworthy; and felt that whatever record leaped to light he never should be shamed, in the opinion of the public, and—whether or no—most certainly not in his own. What are called "the conventions" made no appeal to him. He looked upon them as unnatural, if not hypocritical. The conventions were designed for the defence of society against the individual. In morals, as in politics, Parnell was strongly individualistic. A favourite saying of his was—"What I am I am. What I am not I cannot be." Along with that, he was indifferent to English opinion, and was convinced that whatever else might happen his position in Ireland was unassailable.

On Saturday, November 11, 1890, the day of the hearing of the divorce case of "O'Shea v. O'Shea and Parnell"—in which there was no appearance for either the respondent or co-respondent—Parnell went to the London office of the *Freeman's Journal*, in the Strand, directly opposite the Law Courts, wonderfully and fearfully disguised, so as to escape the curiosity of people. He wore a heavy Ulster coat, its high collar turned up about his ears, a thick woollen muffler covering his beard and the lower part of his face, and on his head a cloth travelling cap with the peak pulled low down over his forehead, and the flaps tied under his chin. No attire could be conceived that was more certain to

attract the attention of the most abstracted passer-by to the wearer of it.

Parnell, however, seemed quite self-possessed, and not the least concerned that the divorce might have an adverse effect upon his political career. "I have been subpœnaed to give evidence in the divorce case," he said to James M. Tuohy, the London correspondent of the *Freeman;* "and I told them I could be found here if they want me." He read the report of the proceedings in "copy" as it was sent by the reporters of the *Freeman* from the Divorce Court to the office, and made no comment until he came to the statement that once while visiting Mrs. O'Shea at her Brighton house, 8, Medina-terrace, Hove, he was compelled to leave by a rope-ladder, or fire-escape, in order to avoid meeting Captain O'Shea, who unexpectedly arrived. This ludicrous detail touched his sense of dignity. "What a blackguard invention," he vehemently cried out.

When the court had adjourned, and Parnell was preparing to leave the *Freeman* office, Tuohy said to him—"As you have abandoned the idea of defending the case, and as it is clear that a verdict will be given against you, might I ask whether you intend to allow the verdict to affect your public position?" He answered with decided emphasis—"No, I shall not permit the result to affect my public position in any way whatever." Indecision and procrastination had no place among the failings of Parnell. Never in the course of his public life, did he pause halting and half-

hearted between two courses. He sat down again and with a pencil wrote his customary summons to the Irish Party for the approaching opening of a new session of Parliament. "As it is unquestionable that the coming session will be one of combat from first to last, and that great issues depend upon its course," he appealed for a full and regular attendance of his followers. The message appeared in the *Freeman* of Monday, simultaneously with the verdict in the divorce case. It was the last that Parnell was ever to address to a united Irish Party.

CHAPTER XV.

"IRELAND OR PARNELL—WHICH?"

At first it appeared certain that Parnell would pass unshaken through the ordeal. There was about him the halo of stupendous success. The magic of his name and renown; the powerful attraction of his personality; the undisputed sway of his leadership, appeared to be as compelling as they ever had been. Accordingly, as at each political crisis in the past, his followers rallied round him with all the old acclamations of devotion, the more intense and earnest, this time, because of the personal trouble that had overtaken him, the shadow that had fallen upon his private life.

John Redmond was the first member of the Party who had the opportunity of speaking out on the situation. He presided at the usual fortnightly meeting of the National League, held in Dublin on Tuesday, November 18, 1890, the day after the publication of the verdict. News had come to Dublin that influential organs of Liberal opinion in London and the provinces had declared that Parnell's duty to Home Rule, and to his English allies in that cause, was promptly to withdraw from public life. Redmond dismissed the suggestion as a grotesque absurdity. He went on to say, amid continuous bursts of applause, in

which the eight or ten other Members of Parliament present, heartily joined:—

"If the Irish people thought that Parnell entertained the idea of retiring they would come to him as one man, and entreat him not to desert them and their country. But, thank God, no such danger ever existed. With that indomitable courage which is, perhaps, his chief characteristic, Mr. Parnell has declared his intention of standing by Ireland to the last, and we tell him here to-day, that never in his whole career was Ireland more determined to stand by him."

This speech set the note to the country. It was sounded by an almost unanimous Press, led by the *Freeman's Journal*, which gave Parnell unqualified support. The feeling of Dublin was expressed at a great public meeting held in the Leinster Hall, on Thursday, November 20. The Lord Mayor (Mr. Kennedy) presided, and there were twenty-five Members of Parliament present. The moral issue was brushed aside. Approving cheers, as well as laughter, greeted the frank assertion of the Lord Mayor that they had no more right to question Parnell's private action and motives in his relations with Mrs. O'Shea than they had to interfere with him, as a Protestant, if he choosed not to go to Mass on Sunday or to eat flesh meat on Friday. "The only crime for which Ireland would go back on Parnell," he added, "is one she knows is impossible in him—the crime of betraying her."

All the members of the Party who spoke vied

with each other in the expression of unalterable determination to stand by their leader. Some of the leading members of the Party were in the United States on a mission to raise funds—John Dillon, T. P. O'Connor, T. D. Sullivan, T. P. Gill, Timothy Harrington, and greatest of all, William O'Brien of *United Ireland*. A glowing tribute to Parnell, signed by the delegates—save T. D. Sullivan, who parted with them on the moral question—aroused tremendous enthusiasm at the meeting. They declared that they stood firmly by the leadership of the man who brought the Irish people "from servitude and despair to the very threshold of emancipation," not only out of gratitude for these "imperishable services, but in profound conviction that his statesmanship and matchless qualities as a leader are essential to the safety of our cause."

Two of the speeches at the meeting were of particular significance. One was Justin McCarthy's, moving the resolution which rejoiced "at the determination of the Irish Parliamentary Party to stand by their leader." He suggested that "chivalrous and generous motives" led Parnell to refrain from defending himself in the divorce court. He asserted that Parnell had raised the Irish cause to a higher level than even Grattan and O'Connell. "I ask you," said he, "are we going to change that man, and set up some wholly inferior man, because some of the Tory and Liberal-Unionist newspapers say he has gone wrong?" "No, no, no," roared the audience.

The other speech was made by T. M. Healy, and greatly to the surprise and delight of those present his expressions of loyalty to Parnell outrivalled McCarthy's. Great store was set by the promoters of the meeting on having Healy present. In 1886 Parnell nominated Captain O'Shea for Galway borough. As the candidate refused to take the Party pledge, and was, in fact, a Liberal, his nomination made Healy and Biggar restless to the point of insubordination, not only as Nationalists, but as moralists, for they were both well aware of the relations between Parnell and Mrs. O'Shea. Parnell got O'Shea returned, so tremendous was his will-power and prestige. But he bore a grudge against his two colleagues. Biggar died in 1889, and Healy, accordingly, was the one member of the Party who was known not to be on very good terms with Parnell. But, though he was very ill at this crisis in the fortunes of his leader, Healy left his bed for the meeting, and appeared on the platform—I was present as a reporter of the *Freeman's Journal*—a haggard, ill-kempt figure, and stooped, notwithstanding that he was encased in plasters. With all his bitterness of speech, Healy had a heart brimful of kindliness, and was so emotional that he might scarify you with his invective one minute, and in the next, should anything occur to touch the generous and forgiving side of his nature, shed tears over the wounds he had caused, and extol you to the skies in honeyed accents. His speech caused the sensation of the meeting. Parnell was "less a man than an institution"; and all

intermeddlers were warned off with the splendid monition—"You are requested not to speak to the Man at the Wheel."

The scene was transferred to Westminster, five days later. On Tuesday, November 25, Parliament assembled. Meanwhile, "the Nonconformist conscience" had blazed out against Parnell from a hundred chapels in England on the intervening Sunday. It was led in the Press by three powerful journalists—W. T. Stead of the *Review of Reviews*, Edward Cook of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes of the *Methodist Times*, all of them Liberal supporters of the Home Rule cause. "If the Irish people deliberately accept such a man as Parnell as their representative," Hughes wrote, "they are morally unfit to enjoy the privilege of self-government." At a public meeting in St. James's Hall, London, he denounced Parnell as "the most infamous adulterer of the century." This group received help from a most unexpected quarter. Michael Davitt at this time had only the slightest association with the Irish Nationalist Movement. His ambition was to become a British democratic leader, with an advanced programme of social reform. He had founded in London a weekly paper, the *Labour World*, and in it he called upon Parnell to retire from public life as an atonement to public sentiment for his misconduct. There was, however, no sign of weakening in the Irish Party. Parnell's official position was that of chairman of the Party, re-elected at the opening of every session.

The Party met for the purpose in Committee Room 15. Richard Power, as Chief Whip of the Party, presided, and there were fifty-nine members present. Parnell, making his first appearance in public since the divorce proceedings, entered the room, accompanied by his private secretary, Henry Campbell, M.P., and received a stirring ovation. He was perfectly cool and unembarrassed. Sexton proposed his re-election in an eloquent speech, and it was seconded by Colonel Nolan in his soldierly blunt and hearty way. The divorce case was of course in everyone's mind; but the only reference to it, was made by Jeremiah Jordan, one of the members for Clare—a man in business as a stationer at Enniskillen, an Ulster Protestant of Scottish descent, but ardently Nationalist, and a characteristic type of that strong, rugged, and outspoken race. He appealed to Parnell to retire for the sake of the cause. But no one supported him, and the resolution was carried not only without a single dissentient but amid loud and prolonged cheers.

Parnell then took the chair. According to the official account of the proceedings given to the Press, he simply thanked the Party for this "further fresh proof of their confidence in him" and added that, "in response to their unanimous desire, he would continue to discharge the duties of leader." Parnell, however, made a most interesting statement on the divorce, by way of defence—his last, as well as his first, utterance on the subject. Only one side of the story, he said, had been

given to the public; but he assured his colleagues that in a short period of time, when he was free to do so, he would be able to put a complexion on the case very different from that which it bore, and could hold his head as high—aye and higher—than ever before, in the face of the world. He went on—

"I am accused of breaking up a happy home, and of shattering a scene of domestic bliss and felicity. If the case had been gone into, a calculation had been made, and it would have been proved, that in the twenty-three years of Mr. O'Shea's married life he spent only 400 days in his own home. This was the happy home which I am alleged to have destroyed.

"I am also accused of betraying a friend. Mr. O'Shea was never my friend. Since I first met him in Ennis, in 1880, he was always my enemy—my bitter and relentless enemy. There is the further charge against me that I abused this man's hospitality. But I never partook at any time of Mr. O'Shea's hospitality, for I never had bite or sup—never had a glass of wine—at his expense.

"I will not dwell any more on this subject except to say that of the two principal witnesses in the case, one was a drunkard and the other a thief.

"Now that I have lifted a corner of the curtain," he said in conclusion, "I will only ask you, gentlemen, to keep your lips sealed, as mine are, on what you have heard until the brief period of time will have elapsed when I can vindicate my-

self, and when you will find that your trust in me has not been misplaced."*

Parnell's purpose, of course, was to prove himself not a voluptuary or a schemer, but a chivalrous man, who had come to the relief of a woman ill-used and abandoned by her husband. In that lies the explanation of his assurance to Davitt and Morley that he would stand vindicated when all was known. But he had mistaken his audience in Room 15. The Nationalist members were in the main Catholics, and deeply religious men, imbued with the Irish sense of the purity of family life. It will, therefore, be understood that Parnell's admission that he was living with a woman who was another man's wife must have penetrated them like an east wind, reducing them to a chilled and dismal condition. They could find no mitigation of that terrible fact in Parnell's speech. A severer strain on their devotion and loyalty can hardly be imagined, one would have thought, and yet they withstood it. Not a single word was said in protest, however bitterly they might have felt at heart the shamefulness of the situation. But within an hour or so the position was suddenly and dramatically changed. The Nationalist members, or the bulk of them, were thrown into

*This speech was not made public until a year afterwards, when Parnell was dead. It appeared in a series of articles published by the "National Press," Dublin (anti-Parnellite daily paper) from November 21 to December 5, 1891. The writer of the articles, entitled, "The Story of Room 15," was Donal Sullivan, one of the hon. secretaries of the Irish Party, a younger brother of T. D. and A. M. Sullivan, who took a note of the speech as it was delivered.

a state of profoundest consternation by the news that Gladstone had sent to the Press a letter declaring that if Parnell did not retire, his own retention of the leadership of the Liberal Party—"based as it has been mainly upon the prosecution of the Irish cause"—would be rendered "almost a nullity."

The desire of the majority of the Irish Party was that Parnell should get them out of this difficulty, as he had done many a time, when trouble arose in the past, without any doubt or faltering on his part, consummate commander-in-chief that he was. Their own solution was that he should take himself away. They protested to themselves, and to all and sundry, in the rooms and corridors at Westminster—members and journalists who might listen to them—that their re-election of Parnell was partly "bluff," in the hope that their show of determination would intimidate the Nonconformists, and partly a compliment to their leader which he would acknowledge, they expected, by voluntarily withdrawing from public life. No one had for them a word of praise or respect or comfort of any kind. To the jokers and cynical men of the world, who mostly abound at Westminster, they were a laughing-stock for the inconsistency and irresolution with which they had befooled themselves. To the few who understood weak human nature, and made allowances for it, they were objects of pity. This fright, this panic, this falling to pieces of the most wonderful allegiance and discipline ever known in politics, was truly

sad to contemplate. It did not spring from any ignoble cause. "Ireland or Parnell?" That was the way they put it. Solicitude for the cause was proving a stronger feeling than attachment to the leader.

All this time, Parnell, the proud, the imperious, the individualist, was in the lower smoking-room, with Campbell, his private secretary, quietly enjoying a cigar and a cup of tea. Who of his followers should go into the dread presence, and beg of him to reconsider his decision to hold on to the position to which they had unanimously called him with hysterical cries and acclamations of fervid loyalty, as the only possible leader? They assembled in the corridor like a flock of children, anxious and distracted, discussing this perplexing question. At length McCarthy and Sexton were induced, very reluctantly, to interview Parnell. In a few minutes they came back with the report that Parnell absolutely refused their request and was scarcely civil to them.

It was then decided, on the suggestion of Sexton, to draw up a requisition to the secretaries of the Party asking them to summon another meeting; and thirty-one signatures were obtained. The meeting was called for Thursday, November 27. It was held in Committee Room 15. Parnell was in the chair, and there were sixty-four members present. John Barry was selected to ask Parnell to withdraw. The appeal was supported by McCarthy and Sexton. On the other hand, Colonel Nolan and John O'Connor urged Parnell not to be

dictated to by Gladstone and to stick to his post. "Mr. Parnell," the official report of the meeting states, "maintained the attitude of a listener, and closed the proceedings by simply leaving the chair." By all accounts, he was colder, prouder and stiffer than ever. A member who was present was asked, after the meeting, how Parnell had conducted himself. "He treated us," was the reply, "as if it was *we* who committed adultery with *his* wife."

The meeting was adjourned until Monday, December 1. On Friday night, November 28, Parnell issued a long manifesto addressed "To the People of Ireland." In it was the flaming phrase —"Will you consent to throw me to the English wolves now howling for my destruction?" Here was the resurgence again of Parnell's anti-English passion which had lain dormant in his sub-consciousness, out of mind, under the reconciling influence of the adoption of Home Rule by Gladstone and the Liberals. It was this racial animosity that first marked Parnell out for distinction among the competitors for the nationalist leadership. It was on this potential weapon he intended now to rely for the maintenance of his position, and the overwhelming of his traitorous followers, as he regarded them.

Chapter XVI.

IN COMMITTEE ROOM FIFTEEN.

Such was the position of affairs when, on Monday, December 1, 1890, the Irish Party met again in Committee Room 15, and sat daily until Saturday, when Parnell was deposed, not by a direct vote—for that was frustrated by Parnell himself as chairman of the meeting—but by the withdrawal from the room of a large majority in repudiation of his leadership.

There was a very full attendance of members, as many as 73 of the 85 being present. The absent twelve included the six delegates in the United States. Five of them telegraphed a condemnation of the manifesto—William O'Brien, John Dillon, T. P. O'Connor, T. D. Sullivan and T. P. Gill. "Mr. Parnell," they said, "has entered upon a rash and fatal path, upon which every consideration for Ireland's safety, as well as our personal honour, forbids us absolutely to follow him." Timothy Harrington, the remaining delegate, sent the message—"My heart is with Mr. Parnell, but my judgment is against him." Among the absentees also were two of the oldest members of the Party—the O'Gorman Mahon, against Parnell; and Richard Lalor, for him; and one of the younger members, Patrick O'Brien, who was in custody for an offence under the Plan of Campaign,

and from his prison declared himself on the side of the leader.

Room 15 was one of several rooms for the accommodation of committees of the House of Commons engaged on Bills, situated in the long corridor upstairs, with windows overlooking the Thames and commanding views of St. Thomas's Hospital and the ancient Lambeth Palace on the opposite side of the river.* The use of it was given to the Irish Party by the Sergeant-at-Arms. In the centre of the room there was a great horseshoe table. At its head sat Parnell, having on his left Campbell, his private secretary, and on his right Justin McCarthy. Others immediately to the right were Sexton and T. M. Healy. Here also was James O'Kelly, one of Parnell's adherents. Opposite to them, and to the left of Parnell, were three of his most active supporters—John O'Connor (then a student at the English Bar), known for his great height, as "Long John," and also, being an old Fenian, as "Six feet six of treason felony"; Edward Harrington, editor of the *Kerry Sentinel;* and J. J. Clancy, journalist and lawyer.

Opponents and supporters of Parnell sat promiscuously at the lower end of both wings of the table, or were gathered separately in groups about the room. The place occupied by John Redmond, foremost champion of Parnell's leadership, was towards the end of the right wing. Near him were his brother, William Redmond, and the newest

*Committee Room 15 has since disappeared in structural alterations of the corridor.

recruit of the Party, Henry Harrison, fresh from Oxford University, and a fine specimen of young Irish manhood. Close at hand, beside the window, were a group of the more irreconcilable of Parnell's opponents. Conspicuous among them were—John Barry, low-sized and portly, with a round, florid face, a determined jaw, and a short blonde beard, turning grey; and Arthur O'Connor, tall, slim and black-bearded, and suave and courteous in manner. These, it would seem, were the only members of the Party, who from the very moment of the divorce verdict made up their minds that Parnell must go, or the cause was lost. But the real leader of the opposition was T. M. Healy. He returned to the sick bed which he had left to praise Parnell at the Leinster Hall, and got out of it again to cross to Westminster to overthrow him. And no one could have a more relentless adversary, or a truer champion. Healy's mind, taking it all in all, was the most powerful then in the service of the Nationalist cause. He was characteristically Irish in his qualities, winning and repellent. He had at his command some of the melting pathos and the racy humour of Daniel O'Connell, and also the savage irony and embittered manner of Dean Swift.

It was agreed that the proceedings should be reported by the parliamentary staff of the *Freeman's Journal*. There were five of us. We sat at a table within the horse-shoe, close to Parnell. Arrangements were made by which we dictated our shorthand notes to reporters of the Press Associa-

tion in the corridor outside; and through this agency a full report was circulated to the newspapers of the United Kingdom, and those of the Dominions and America and the Continent also.† The interest in the proceedings was not only widespread, but intense. Throughout the week public attention was entirely concentrated on Committee Room 15.

The debate was opened on a resolution proposed and seconded by two survivors of the original Irish Party formed by Butt—Colonel Nolan and Sir Joseph Neale McKenna, both being supporters of Parnell. It declared for a postponement of a decision as to the leadership until members personally ascertained the views of the constituencies, and, thus informed, met together in Dublin. The discussion, at the outset, was lifted to a high and dignified plane, worthy of the gravity of the occasion, by four most able speeches. These were made by Sexton, John Redmond, Healy and Parnell. The case for the majority was stated by Sexton.

†From the London Letter of the Dublin "Daily Express," Wednesday, December 3, 1890:—

"Even the admiration of "The Times" is extorted to-day at the great debating ability which was displayed yesterday in Room 15. The admiration is general. At the same time, it should not be forgotten to whom it is due that the country is able to appreciate the eloquence of the Irish members, and I must say that among London journalists there is the unqualified opinion that the "Freeman's" reporters yesterday turned out a report which has, perhaps, never been beaten for accuracy. It was a highly creditable achievement. The gentlemen who got out the report—not without many difficulties—under the direction of Mr. J. M. Tuohy, were Messrs. Thomas Harrington, Charles Ryan, Michael MacDonagh, Ernest Hobson and Timothy O'Riordan."

A man of medium height, he presented a dapper figure as he stood at the table, his broad brow tapering down to regular features; the ever-changing expression in his dark eyes, and the nervous twitching of his small shapely hands, betokening a highly sensitive disposition. He had not only a rare intellect, but a high character, and he passed through that trying, momentous week in Room 15 with the one enhanced and the other undimmed. Sexton contended that a decision must be come to at once. Delay would break up the alliance between the people of Ireland and "the only friends from whom they had any reasonable hope—the Liberal democracy of Great Britain." The question at issue lay between the leader and the cause. "If the leader is retained, in my judgment the cause is lost," said Sexton. "If the cause is to be won," he repeated, "it is essential that the leader should retire." A dissolution of Parliament, with the question of the leadership undetermined, would leave them at the mercy of the enemy. Parnell broke in with the sarcastic remark—"At the mercy of the unrivalled coercionist of the Irish race"—repeating an epithet which he had applied to Gladstone years before. But Sexton's speech struck the note of opposition to Parnell's leadership which was maintained to the end—"We must placate English Liberal opinion."

When Redmond rose Parnell welcomed him by thumping the table as he loudly called him by name. "My friend, Jack Redmond." A student

at the Bar, Redmond looked quite boyish, with his soft full face, surmounted by light curling hair. He urged that as they were being asked to "sell their leader" to the English, they were bound to see what they were offered as his price. Parnell again interrupted. "Don't sell me for nothing," he cried out. "If you get my value, you may change me to-morrow." Healy, following Redmond, scornfully repudiated the charge that the opponents of Parnell were deferring to the Nonconformist conscience. "I went to the Leinster Hall," he boasted, "and pronounced for Mr. Parnell in face of English clamour. Aye, we stood up for Mr. Parnell against the Bulls of the Pope of Rome. It was not likely that we would allow ourselves to be influenced by the declaration of a single Wesleyan pulpit."

As Healy sat down, Parnell sprang to his feet. It was evident he was intensely moved, and that all his remarkable power of self-restraint was needed to keep his passion in control. He began by bitterly reproaching his former secretary with ingratitude. "That Mr. Healy should be here to destroy me is due to myself," he exclaimed. "Who trained him in this warfare? Who saw his genius? Who gave him his first opportunity and chance?" Then he turned upon his opponents as a body. "Why did you encourage me to come forward and maintain my leadership in the face of the world, if you were not going to stand by me?" he asked. "Why did my officers encourage me to come forward, and take my position on the

bridge and at the wheel, if they were going to act as traitors, and to hand me over to the other commander-in-chief?" Then came a telling passage in reference to John Barry, who had been the first to assail him:—

"Of the man that has been put up—I was going to say the leader-killer—the leader-killer who sharpens his poniard to stab me as he stabbed the old lion, Isaac Butt, in the days gone by. I remember well, and it will be a recollection which will always be a comfort to me, that though Isaac Butt 'renaged' me, I never, in word or deed, counselled the attacks made on him, and although the times were times of crisis—such as we did pass through and may again—I allowed that old man to go down honoured to his grave rather than that I should seek to step into the shoes of a politician who, however many his faults, had created a great movement, and had given to me, and to many others, the power of participating and taking part in it.

"I want to ask you, before you vote my disposition, to be sure that you are getting value for it," he continued. "If I am to leave you, I should like to leave you in security," he cried out in a voice which, though high-pitched, trembled with an excess of feeling. "I should like, and it is not an unfair thing for me to ask," he pleaded, "that I should come within sight of the Promised Land." The passage brought tears to the eyes of many of those present.

Parnell was then in his 44th year. During the sittings in Room 15 he wore light-brown Irish tweeds of a striped pattern, with a short jacket and a long, woollen knitted waist-coat, dark-brown in colour. This suit set off his tall, upright and well-poised figure—wide-shouldered, broad in the back and long-legged. He had the straight head of leaders of men, and a wide square beard with a slight touch of auburn. The profile was well-cut —aristocratic is, perhaps, the word that best describes it—and the expression was reserved, yet strong, energetic, and bold. The complexion was of a pearly whiteness, which gave the face the reflection of an unseen light—the light of an intensely concentrated mind. The dark-brown eyes were deeply set under the thick brows and long lashes and had a wavering glint in them, like a glimmering fire of brushwood in a thicket, seen at night. He had a dominating personality. No one could encounter Parnell, even casually, and fail to recognise that he was a very singular man. Some of the ablest members of the Party were against him; but he was easily the quickest-witted, as well as the strongest willed, man in Room 15.

A division on the proposal that members should consult their constituencies and meet in Dublin was taken just after midnight on Tuesday. The last speaker was Jeremiah Jordon of Enniskillen, who ventured on a defence of "The Nonconformist Conscience." While he was speaking, Parnell made one of the few jokes of the sittings. Leaning

across the table he said in a loud whisper and with that captivating smile of his—" I say, Sexton, are you fellows going to keep this thing up all night?" The pleasantry passed round the room and was all the more appreciated, coming not only from so unexpected a source, but following on two days of undisguised obstruction by the Parnellites.

The circumstances attending the division were very remarkable. There was no gas or electric illumination in the room. A few oil lamps and candles were brought in by the corridor-attendants and placed here and there on the tables. These glimmering lights only accentuated the prevailing gloom. Parnell had a lamp beside his chair, but as he stood up to take the voice of the meeting his face was only faintly visible by its pallor which gave out a dim reflection, in the darkness that surrounded it. He put the question in the parliamentary form. " All who are in favour of it say 'Aye.' " There were loud and repeated cries of "Aye" from his supporters. " Those to the contrary say ' No.' " His opponents shouted " No." " I think the 'Ayes' have it," he continued. There was a scornful laugh at this ruling in his own favour, and then the challenging assertion—" The ' Noes' have it," in the House of Commons manner.

The votes were immediately taken. Parnell, holding a printed list of the names of the Party in his left hand, and a pencil in his right, said he would go through the roll alphabetically and each member as he was called would answer " Aye" or

"No." He bent down so that the light of the lamp might fall on the paper, and went through the list in a low, steady, even voice. Towards the end came his own name. "Parnell, Charles Stewart," he called out in a louder tone. "Aye" he responded in a louder tone still, and his adherents cheered and banged the tables. When he had finished the calling of the roll, he counted the numbers on each side. "I find," said he with perfect composure, "that the 'Noes' are 44 and the 'Ayes' 29. So I declare that the 'Noes' have it by a majority of 15." Such was the result of what was, perhaps, the most fateful division in Irish history. It was not inappropriate that it should have been taken in semi-darkness. The declaration of the issue was received in deep silence. Members at once dispersed.

CHAPTER XVII.

"THE SPLIT."

The Party reassembled in Room 15, at 12 o'clock on Saturday, December 6, for the last time. Efforts to find a settlement had failed. The sitting lasted five-and-a-half hours. From beginning to end there were noisy explosions of passion—altercations, personal abuse, defiances and challenges, stopping short only at physical violence, and concluding with the splitting up of the Irish Party into two. Ireland was also broken as if by the shock of an earthquake.

Both sides were aware they had met for the final encounter, and each came prepared with its plan, accordingly. John O'Connor was to move a resolution calling the attention of the Irish people to the fact that Gladstone refused to state his views in regard to Home Rule—which he was asked to do by a deputation from Room 15—until the Party first removed Parnell from the chairmanship. The anti-Parnellites were to move a declaration that Parnell's leadership was at an end. This was entrusted to William Abraham, member for West Limerick, tall and good-looking, with a long black beard. He was a nurseryman in Limerick city, a Protestant and of English descent, with advanced nationalist views. Though his voice was seldom heard in the House of Com-

mons, he had a cultured and pleasing style of speaking which made him very popular at meetings in England in support of Home Rule.

O'Connor and Abraham rose almost together. Abraham, perhaps, was the first on his feet, but O'Connor was called on by Parnell. A terrific din immediately burst forth. The contending yells of "O'Connor" and "Abraham" were most bewildering. At the head of the table stood Parnell, shouting " Mr. John O'Connor," " Mr. John O'Connor," at the top of his voice. His head and chest were thrown back in defiant attitude; his brow was contracted; his pale face was twitching, and there was a wild look in his eyes. The entire assembly was in a state of incoherent excitement. O'Connor and Abraham remained standing—O'Connor just round the bend of the horseshoe table, on the left; Abraham down at the end of the room to the right—each eager to move his resolution before the other, each supported by the clamour of his friends.

Very few members, indeed, were now seated. Among the few was Colonel Nolan, the old artillery officer, whose sharp barrack-square voice could be distinguished calling " chair"; " chair"; " chair." He was to the left. On the other side, Sexton and McCarthy, were likewise seated, but silent—Sexton, with flushed face, obviously pained and perturbed; McCarthy placidly pulling at his beard. Abraham moved up towards the top of the right wing of the table, and standing within a yard or two of the chair read in a loud and ring-

ing voice his motion to depose Parnell. "I beg to move that, sir," said he, addressing Parnell. "You are out of order," Parnell vehemently replied, and in the next breath he restarted shouting "Mr. John O'Connor."

Abraham then threw his slip of paper over the shoulder of Healy; and it dropped on the table. Healy at once passed it on to McCarthy; and the latter, rising from his seat, was looking at the paper through his spectacles, apparently about to read it, when Parnell violently snatched it from him and, crumpling it into a ball, thrust it into his trousers' pocket. "How dare you, sir," he fiercely cried. "How dare you attempt to usurp me in the chair?" Parnell completely lost his habitual self-command. With uplifted arms and clenched fists, his face white and drawn, he glared menacingly down on the little, plump, elderly gentleman that was his first lieutenant. "You have been waiting to step into my shoes all the time," he cried out. "Until the Party depose me from the chair I'm your chairman." So ready did he appear to be to fall upon McCarthy that two of his most steadfast supporters and intimate friends, John Redmond and Edmund Leamy, hastened to his side and placed each a restraining and soothing hand upon his shoulders. McCarthy did not shrink in the least from that awful figure of his Chief which loomed so threateningly above him, and whose blazing anger seemed, to say the least, about to singe his beloved beard. His face flushed deeply red, and he looked steadily back

through his glasses at Parnell with undaunted courage, while his more excited supporters crowded behind him yelling " shame" " shame" " shame!" at Parnell. " You're a dirty trickster," Barry was heard exclaiming. McCarthy, however, displayed no physical aggressiveness; and in that respect the writer of history presented a striking contrast to the maker of history—the one contemplatively pulling at his beard, the other, with trembling frame, extended arms and clenched hands.

Fortunately, nothing of a more painful nature happened. Indeed, the incident steadied the assembly. It was agreed that O'Connor should speak first and be followed by Abraham. Within a quarter of an hour of that furious scene, and while John O'Connor was still speaking, I saw the two protagonists engaged in the most amicable conversation. Parnell was apologising to McCarthy for his hasty action. He took the crumpled slip of paper from his pocket, and, smoothing it out, handed it to McCarthy, with a winning smile and that knightly air he could so well assume, and McCarthy received it with a joke and the most friendly caressing of his beard. This speedy reconciliation was characteristic of the two leaders, high-minded Irish gentlemen both, though of widely different natures and temperaments.

Parnell then took to reading the *Freeman's Journal*. He turned sideways in his chair and held the paper wide open and at arms' length before him. It was evident from the nervous and rapid

manner in which he turned over its pages and glanced through its columns that he had little attention to spare for its contents. He was soon attracted from it by a startling interjection into John O'Connor's speech by Healy, which led to the most painfully dramatic episode of the day. O'Connor was arguing that the anti-Parnellites were placing themselves unreservedly under the leadership of Gladstone. "He is the master of the Party," exclaimed John Redmond. Healy jerked forward his long neck, his teeth showing in the sneer that parted his lips, and called out in the most rasping of tones—"And who is to be the mistress of the Party?" A breathless hush followed upon this sudden snap of venom and contumely; and then the Parnellites with one voice roared "shame" and "coward."

Parnell violently flung the newspaper away and turned quickly round to the table. A spasm of pain contracted his face. He was again in a raging fury. Twice he half rose from his seat and twice fell back again. Then, grasping the arms of his chair, he raised himself up. He seemed so clearly bent upon striking Healy that a few of Healy's friends rapidly moved up and clustered round him. Among them was Arthur O'Connor. "I appeal to my friend the chairman," said the suave O'Connor, as if interceding for Healy. "Better appeal to your own friends," cried Parnell. His right arm was fully extended and his clenched hand was close to Healy's face. In his voice was that vibration which came from the

quivering of his nerves. "Better appeal," he exclaimed, "to that cowardly little scoundrel there who dares in an assembly of Irishmen to insult a woman."

It was magnificently said, and it had a most profound effect. All the Parnellites, and not a few of the anti-Parnellites, seemed to feel that the proceedings were not to end without one good deed, at least. Justin McCarthy, sitting beside Parnell, stopped pulling at his beard lest by the gesture he should distract the Chief from his purpose. Even Sexton, who was between McCarthy and Healy, drew back his chair a little, so as not to obstruct the arm of retribution. But the blow never fell. Healy sat with folded arms, unmoved either by Parnell's retort or threat, or the hostile roar that hurtled about his head. Parnell himself fell back in his chair, exhausted. He was breathing heavily through the nostrils, and his thick beard could not conceal the twitching of his lips. He seemed on the verge of an hysterical outburst. The fiery glimmer was quenched in his eyes, though there was no tear in them. It was to himself he was crying—crying as if his heart would break. No doubt, he was thinking of the woman he loved so dearly, and who, he knew, was sorrowing for him at home on account of this frightful ordeal through which for her sake he was passing. In the spectacle of that strong and reserved man in his mental agony there was a revelation of the dignity of elemental human nature. Everyone was touched by it, vaguely but powerfully.

Happily the end was now near. Soon afterwards, Justin McCarthy rose and in a few dignified sentences, spoken in his saddest tones, said the time had come to bring the debate to a close. "I see no further use in carrying on a discussion which must be barren of all but reproach, ill-temper, controversy and indignity," he concluded; "and I will therefore suggest that all who think with me at this grave crisis should withdraw with me from this room." He then moved from the table, and, passing behind Parnell's chair, walked towards the door. There was no demonstration. Forty-four members quietly stood up and followed their new leader in silence. There was added to their numbers one of those who had voted for Parnell in the midnight division on Tuesday. This was young Justin Huntly McCarthy, novelist and playwright, who sat for Newry. After his father's speech, at the moment of the breaking-up, he interposed to say that he was sorry for the decision, but it had been taken and he felt bound to go with the Party. It was then half-past four o'clock, and the room was in twilight, lit up by the blazing coal in the fireplace. For all concerned it was truly a heart-breaking business, this split in a Party which had fought so unitedly and so successfully for ten years, just on the point, too, as it seemed, of the fruition of their fondest hopes. A group of Parnellites gathered at the door, and a murmur of sad good-byes passed between those that were going and those who remained. Hands were also shaken. But many personal friendships

that had endured for years on the most intimate and warmest terms were dissolved and changed into the bitterest animosities.

Parnell sat upright in the chair and stared straight down the room with fixed, wide-open eyes. I do not think he saw anything. He seemed to be entirely unconscious of his surroundings. " Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone." The nature of his thoughts, who can tell? They might well have been of a disquieting kind. Two-thirds of his Party had deserted him, including the ablest and most influential of its members, men who faithfully stood by him in all the trials and troubles of the past, and whose help had enabled him to overcome them. But it was not in the nature of Parnell to regard the proceedings as ominous of coming evil to himself. He had proudly declared that his position was not that of a mere leader of a parliamentary party. He was leader of the Irish nation. A new phase of his wonderful career had opened. That was all. It was more characteristic of that indomitable personality for his thoughts to have turned rather to the next move in the great game. And if it was on the future he was ruminating there can hardly be a doubt that he was looking confidently to Ireland to crush these Judases—as they appeared in his eyes—who would sell him to the enemy, not because he had been untrue to Ireland, not even because he had sinned (for the moral issue was never raised in Room 15), but because they themselves wanted to curry favour with the English.

But whatever the colour of Parnell's deep reverie may have been, he was aroused from it, with a start, by a remark of Edmund Leamy. "What is it?" he asked with a puzzled air. "Time is up," said Leamy. "Ah, yes," he responded; and interrupting Alexander Blane, who was speaking, he said, "I wish to tell you that the Sergeant-at-Arms says we shall have to leave at 5 o'clock." Then, rising from his chair, he addressed his faithful adherents, proudly and confidently, in the following terms:—

"Gentlemen, we have won the day (loud cheers). Although our ranks are reduced in numbers I hold this chair still (renewed cheering). Although many of those who were our comrades have left us, Ireland has power to fill our ranks again (loud cheers). Ireland has power to send us a good man and a true for every one of those who have left us, and I little know our gallant country if I am mistaken in the opinion that when she gets the opportunity she will freely exercise that power (renewed applause).

"They left this room because their position here was no longer tenable (hear, hear). They saw they had arrayed against them that great force to which we must all bow—that great force without which none of them would ever have come here (cheers). And recognising that, they stand today in the most contemptible of all positions—the position of men who, having taken pledges to be true to their Party, to be true to their leader, to

be true to their country, have been false to them all" (loud cheers).

The majority went to another room on the same corridor and elected Justin McCarthy " sessional chairman." They also passed a resolution renewing their adhesion to the principle that the Party was independent of all other parties, and declaring that no settlement of Home Rule would be entertained by them that did not satisfy the aspirations of the Irish people. When the news of the day reached Gladstone, he fervently exclaimed, "Thank God! Home Rule is saved!" Lord Salisbury, the leader of the Unionists—that master of flouts and jeers, as he was called—is said to have remarked, " Kitty O'Shea deserves to have a monument raised to her in every town in England." Both these comments were proved by events to have been wide of the mark. Home Rule was not saved. The Union might have got a more extended lease of life, but it was not—as Salisbury implied—made secure. The true significance of the proceedings in Room 15 is that they constituted a most remarkable demonstration of Irish trust in English statesmanship, or in English good-will towards Ireland.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"WAIL, WAIL YE FOR THE MIGHTY ONE."

The next time I saw Parnell was in Dublin, a few weeks later, on his return from a bye-election in Kilkenny county, where he got his first knock-down blow—the defeat of his standard-bearer, Vincent Scully, member of a Catholic land-owning family in Tipperary, by the anti-Parnellite candidate, Sir John Pope Hennessy, a distinguished Colonial Governor and a Protestant. The majority against him was 1162, the voting being—Hennessy, 2,527; Scully, 1,365. The contest was fiercely waged. At Castlecomer, Parnell was struck in the face by a bag of lime which partially blinded his right eye. But Dublin was solidly on the side of "the Chief," and the reception given to him could not have been more delirious had he come back from the fight victorious. It was at night. He was escorted from Kingsbridge Railway-station to the rooms of the Parnell Leadership Committee in Rutland-square by an enormous crowd not only with bands and banners but with flaming torches also.

As the procession was passing through College Green a thrilling incident happened. Parnell stood up in the waggonette, barehead, wearing a white bandage covering his injured eye and half

his face; and, visible to all in the glare of the torches—a wild figure with dishevelled hair and unkempt beard—pointed with outstretched right arm at that noble building—"The Old House in College Green." He said not a word, but the crowd expressed what was in his heart and theirs—the mighty sentiment of nationality—in a prolonged roar of applause. It was a fine gesture. That picture of Parnell was one never to be effaced from the memory of those who saw it. There was nothing about him suggestive of his being but the sport of Fate. He still seemed to be the Arbiter of Destiny, as so many had said, and led him to believe.

My next memory of Parnell—a most painful one—was in the House of Commons. It was Wednesday, April 15, 1891, and the Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) Bill was being discussed. The Bill proposed to extend the Sunday closing of public-houses to the large towns and cities which were then exempted from it. Both sections of the Nationalist members were divided in opinion about it, but the majority were in its favour. Parnell was strongly opposed to it. They sat side by side, below the gangway, as of yore, Parnellites and anti-Parnellites, but it was obvious that there was between them a gulf which could not be bridged, a distance over which no friendly voice could reach. Parnell was in his old place, the fourth seat from the gangway on the third bench; and between him and Justin McCarthy, who was nearer to the gangway, interposed the huge form of T. B. Potter,

Radical member for Rochdale, the fattest member of the House. To the left of Parnell sat Sexton, the only one of the "Seceders" with whom I ever saw him exchange a word. The corner seat of the bench behind—the top bench—was occupied by John Redmond. On the bench immediately below Parnell were to be seen the brothers Healy, T. M. and Maurice.

Parnell, in his speech, strongly protested against the English Parliament interfering in this purely Irish question. "Make yourself sober first," he cried out most vehemently. When he sat down, both Maurice Healy and Sir Charles Russell (afterwards Lord Russell of Killowen) rose to continue the debate. The anti-Parnellites raised loud cries of "Healy, Healy"; and Russell gave way, assuming, as everyone else did, that some demonstration had been pre-arranged, to be led off by Maurice Healy, who was Parnell's fellow-member in the representation of Cork city. Healy said only a few words, but they were most humiliating to Parnell. "I only rise for the purpose of assuring the House that neither on this, nor on any other public question, does the hon. gentleman who has just sat down represent the city of Cork." Maurice Healy's piping and querulous voice gave additional bitterness to his words. Flinging back his right arm towards Parnell, he added—"If the hon. gentleman wishes to test the truth of my words let him resign." It was well-known that the challenge thus flung down was one Parnell could take up only at the risk of losing his seat. And

that seat was for " Rebel Cork"! What a situation.

The cheers which followed lasted far longer than the speech. All the Liberals joined in it. It was swelled by the deep baying tones of Gladstone. The majority Nationalists yelped and girded at Parnell. Yet he sat with folded arms, and the brim of his tall hat low over his eyes, apparently unmoved, as if the fierce hostility raging round him was intended for some one else. He appeared to be beyond the provocation of hate. Yet I feel sure his sense of pride was deeply outraged. He restrained himself solely because, in the circumstances, there was no crushing and overwhelming retort at his command. All the strangers in the public galleries stood up to get a better view of the tumultuous scene.

In those days, I wrote the parliamentary sketch called " In the House" for the *Freeman's Journal.* Referring to the description of the proceedings on April 15, 1891, I find that I say of Maurice Healy, after his speech—" He sat down ghastly pale, his composure gone, the reaction set in, and in his seat he positively shivered with excitement." But there is no mention in the sketch, as published, of the incidents which followed. My account of them was, in fact, suppressed. When Parnell returned to the House, after voting in the division, he found not only his customary place occupied—that place from which he had so often given expression to Ireland's hatred and defiance of her rulers—but the entire bench filled by a closely compact line of anti-

Parnellites, scowling or mocking at him. If Parnell would not resign, he should not have his seat, if they could prevent it. Parnell passed up the gangway to a place on the top bench. But even there he was not left in peace. His erstwhile followers turned on him, and jeeringly let him know what they thought of him as a low, common fellow. It seemed as if they were bent on taking full revenge for the long years of adulation they paid him—thinking that he was a demi-god, while, all the time, he was only a human creature like themselves, with the moral weaknesses that flesh is heir to—and particularly for having been made by him so foolish and absurd in Room 15. Yet now and then they looked at each other in wild surprise, as if wondering whether it was really true they were doing this thing. Hooting Parnell in the House of Commons! Hounding Parnell from their midst! A thing so monstrous that, only a few short months before, it would have been thought by them a sacrilege to believe it possible. Parnell said not a word, but got up and crossed the gangway to a part of the House where probably he was never seen seated before. He sought refuge among the Liberals. They, at least, would not revile him as he sat in their midst. Indeed, pity was expressed on the faces of many of them. Happily, Parnell at the moment was so self-absorbed as not to notice it. The commiseration of the English members added to the contumely of his fellow-countrymen, would be more than even he could have borne.

It must not be supposed that in this baiting of Parnell all the majority Nationalists took part. They were already tending to split up into rival groups, and those chiefly responsible for the scene were what were called the " Healyites." It was plain to see that Sexton was pained. And as for Justin McCarthy, the leader, he sat at the gangway corner of the third bench, still with his genial suggestion of conciliation and good-fellowship, his head bowed, however, and eyes dimmed behind his glasses, as he stroked, rather nervously, a beard of a deeper grey. All this time, it should be mentioned, William O'Brien and John Dillon were undergoing a sentence of six months' imprisonment that was imposed for offences under the Plan of Campaign before " the Split."

Great was Parnell's parliamentary fall, for he fell from a great height. How great it was could only be appreciated by those who saw, as I did, his wonderful triumph in the House of Commons, but two years before. It was on March 1, 1889, the historic day the news came that Richard Pigott had rounded off his confession of having forged *The Times* letter—purporting to be an admission by Parnell of sympathy with the Phœnix Park murders—by shooting himself in Madrid. There was a fine debate that night on an amendment to the Address moved by John Morley, declaring that Balfour's administration of Ireland was " harsh, oppressive and unjust" and calling for measures of conciliation that would bring contentment to the Irish people and establish a real Union between

Great Britain and Ireland. At 11 o'clock, in a House packed full with members for the division, Parnell rose in his place on the third bench. His followers sprang to their feet, cheering thunderously and waving their hats. The entire Liberal Opposition immediately got up and joined wholeheartedly in the act of homage. At the Front Bench, the leaders were to be seen, Gladstone, Morley, Harcourt, Asquith, all contributing to the acclaim. It was one of the most impressive demonstrations ever witnessed in the House of Commons, unparalleled, indeed, as an ovation of regard and esteem for a member. The Unionists, to the right of the Speaker, looked on silently and in amazement.

All eyes were fixed on Parnell. Those of his colleagues who were nearest to him moved aside, so that he should stand out distinctly, the leading figure in the scene. Coldly impassive, the only one on the Opposition side that was impervious to the contagion of the enthusiasm that swept the benches, he bent his head as if in disdainful refusal to gaze upon the demonstration. Then, when Nationalists and Liberals sat down, and the shouting was over, he proceeded to make one of his calmest and most reserved speeches, without saying a word in reference to that extraordinary and spontaneous exhibition of honour and respect. Amazing man! In his heart he had a contempt for the English part of it. "I asked him afterwards," his widow says, "if he had not felt very proud and happy then, but he only smiled and

answered—'They would all be at my throat if they could.'" Yet the concluding passage of his speech is very remarkable, read in the light of after events:—

"I am convinced that our people, knowing that England, Scotland and Wales have for the first time turned the ear of reason to a solution of this question, will steadily resist every incitement to disorder, to turbulence and to crime; and that they will hold fast in the true way pointed out to them by the right hon. gentleman, the member for Midlothian in 1885, until he gets that chance, which we hope and believe will be a near one, both for the sake of Ireland and the sake of England, of again touching the great heart of his countrymen."*

I heard the last words of Parnell in the House of Commons. They were said on August 3, 1891, in support of a motion moved by John Redmond, asking for the amnesty of John Daly, of Limerick, and the other dynamite prisoners convicted of treason felony. Parnell was moderate and conciliatory in tone. "These conspiracies, even in America, have been abandoned for many years, and no one now wishes to blow up the British Empire with dynamite; an idea which has passed out of the view of the most extreme Irishman. These events," he added, "terrible, no doubt, as they were, have passed away, and cannot a powerful Government and a powerful nation consider the case of the prisoners with clemency and with mercy?"

*"Parliamentary Debates" (third series), Vol. 333, p. 206.

In Ireland, Parnell's followers lay in the towns, and even there he drew support chiefly from the younger men imbued with advanced nationalist views—the "hill-side men," as Healy called them in his ironic way. It was when he visited the agricultural districts that Parnell made the rending discovery that his old spell had lost much of its potency. There the moral issue told strongly against him. Happily the struggle did not last long. Happily for the tortured soul of Parnell, who received from coarse-minded men among those who led the movement against him, blows that can only be described as foul. More happily still, for the good name of Ireland—a more precious thing than political personalities and principles—which it tended to degrade to the gutter. But though it was a most envenomed fight, it had, being Irish, its lighter and amusing side. As the representative of the *Freeman's Journal,* I went down to Limerick with Parnell and a large body of his leading supporters. We arrived late in the evening and were escorted to the hotel by an immense crowd with bands, banners and torch-lights. The people were addressed by Parnell and others from a balcony on the second floor, to which access was obtained from the drawing-room by a window that opened like a door. The proprietor of the hotel pointed out that as the iron-railing of the balcony was low a speaker in a moment of excitement or forgetfulness might over-balance himself and fall into the area. So far as Parnell was concerned, the warning fell on inattentive ears. He was talking to

members of the company at the time, and either did not hear it or heed it.

At any rate, when the chairman made a few introductory remarks to the crowd and returned to the room saying " Now, Mr. Parnell," the latter who, till then, was calm and composed, hastily buttoned up his frock-coat. He trembled as he did so, and his face was twitching. It seemed as if he were arraying himself in a frenzy. Then dashing out on to the balcony, like a man in a furious rage, he launched forth into a tremendous rhetorical effort. There was that note of deep hoarseness in his voice which always crept into it when he was highly excited. Everybody at once saw the danger he was in of toppling over the balcony. Two stout young fellows seized his coat-tails, and by twisting them rope-like held on with desperate effort during the half-hour the speech lasted. It was a ludicrous spectacle in a way. What was most surprising was that Parnell never once looked behind to see what it was that was tugging so violently at his skirts as he twisted and turned in the throes of his speech. He seemed to be quite oblivious that anything out of the common was happening.

On his return to the room Parnell looked exhausted, but soon recovered his customary state of mental and physical placidity. He was followed by a local working-man of extreme political views and remarkable fluency of speech. The chairman was of a cautious type rarely to be found at a Parnellite meeting. As he stood at the balcony

door he kept punctuating the speaker's sentences with the remark "keep within the Constitution"; "keep well within the Constitution." The speaker, having quoted with approval some lines from a rebel ballad which acclaimed "the pathos of a pike-head, and the logic of a blow," availed of the opportunity afforded by the loud burst of cheering which followed, to turn round and ask the chairman what he was saying. The chairman, speaking slowly and with emphasis, replied—"I was advising you to keep within the Con-sti-tu-tion." "An' what the divil might that be?" said the working-man in a tone of genuine surprise. The answer he got was a roar of laughter from the company in which Parnell joined. Then as he resumed his speech, a sudden whim took hold of Parnell, and, approaching the chairman, he said with the utmost gravity—"Perhaps it would be better for himself, and for us all, if you advised him to keep within the window."

In the autumn, after the rising of Parliament, Parnell resumed his week-end pilgrimages from Brighton to Ireland for the purpose of addressing public meetings on Sundays. He refused no invitation to speak, no matter how remote or unimportant the district from which it came, or the personal inconvenience it involved. The end was now close at hand, though no one imagined it was so. This made all the more pathetic the loneliness of these visits. The cruel voices of indecency and vulgarity were hushed. Even the general ferment had died down. But what must have been far

harder for Parnell to bear than the animosity of his opponents, was the cold fit which had come over his parliamentary colleagues. They were staggered by the rapid succession of severe blows their cause had sustained. The latest was the defection of the *Freeman's Journal*. The principal owner of the paper was the widow of Dwyer Gray. She was the daughter of a celebrated Englishwoman, Caroline Chisholm, known as " the emigrants' friend." At first she deeply sympathised with Parnell; but as a devout Catholic, she felt that after his marriage with Mrs. O'Shea on June 25, 1891, she could no longer support him—the Catholic hierarchy having declared that by this act Parnell had but aggravated his original offence—and, accordingly, the paper became anti-Parnellite, and Edward Byrne, its able editor, went out to struggle with poverty until he died not long afterwards.

In these depressing circumstances, Parnell was advised by his chief supporters not to obtrude himself so much on public attention, but rather to keep in the background and await developments. Perhaps 999 men out of any thousand would have done so. At no period of his career did Parnell show his inflexible resolution more than in his persistence in continuing this fight. Immediately after the secession in Room 15 he was asked by the representative of the *Freeman* whether he had any message for the Irish people. " Tell them," said he, " I will fight to the last." Thus he had given his pledge, and nothing could induce him to depart

from it. The pitifulness of it all was, none the less, apparent to him. At this time he wrote a letter to his mother in America, which was a wail of anguish. "I am weary, dear mother, of these troubles, weary unto death; but it is all in a good cause. With health, and the assistance of my friends, I am confident of the result." She had called his attention to reports in the American papers that she was in poverty because of his neglect. "They are on a par with the endless calumnies they shoot at me from behind every bush," he said. "Let them pass. They will die of their own venom."†

On Sunday, September 13, 1891, I was present at a meeting addressed by Parnell in the Market-square, Listowel, Kerry. The crowd was not very large, but it was wild with devotion for "the Chief." He was under the shadow of death. This was evident from his haggard looks as he appeared on the platform in the sunlight. In his speech, which I reported, there was this passage:—

"If I were dead and gone to-morrow, the men who are fighting against English influence in Irish public life would fight on still. They would still be Independent Nationalists. They would still believe in the future of Ireland a Nation. And they would still protest that it was not by taking orders from an English Minister that Ireland's future could be saved, protected or secured."

†In May of that year the House of Representatives, United States, granted a naval pension of 50 dollars a month to Mrs. Parnell, as the daughter of Admiral Stewart of the American Navy.

On that day four weeks, exactly, almost to the very hour, I saw his coffin lowered into the grave at Glasnevin Cemetery. The words I have quoted were accepted by his adherents as his political will and testament.

The last time I heard his voice he uttered these words, concluding his speech—" We assert to-day in this town of Listowel, what we asserted in 1885, and the years before it, that no man has a right to fix the boundary of a Nation—that no man has a right to limit the aspirations of our people." And in my last sight of him, as I left the meeting to go to the telegraph office, he was sitting in a crouching attitude at a table on which was a large bunch of flowers in a jug, the offering of women admirers. He had the collar of his overcoat up about his ears; his silk hat set low on his forehead, his face hid behind the flowers, which he had drawn close to him, as if to conceal from the curious gaze of the crowd its care-worn expression, as he lost himself in one of his introspective reveries—a dejected, lonely and melancholy figure.

Parnell addressed one other meeting, a fortnight later, on Sunday, September 27, 1891, at Creggs, in the West of Ireland. He was then suffering from an acute attack of rheumatism, carrying his left arm in a sling to ease the pain. In the course of his speech he said—" If I had taken the advice of my doctor I should have gone to bed when I arrived in Dublin, but if I had done that my enemies would be throwing up their hats and

announcing that I was dead before I was buried." His low spirits were reflected in the last words he was to say at a public meeting—"I know that you look to Ireland's future as a nation—if we gain it. We may not be able to gain it, but if not it will be left for those who come after us to win. But we will do our best." On returning to Dublin, he stayed for three days at the house of Dr. Joseph Kenny, M.P. in Rutland-square—a staunch adherent and a true friend of "the Chief" in this pitiable close of his career—and left Ireland for the last time on September 30. "I'll be back on Sunday week," he said on parting with Dr. Kenny. And he was; but he was brought over in his coffin.

Parnell died on Tuesday, October 6, 1891 (just before midnight) from rheumatic fever, at his residence, 10, Walsingham Terrace, Hove, Brighton. The news, published in the afternoon of October 7, created a profound sensation throughout the world. It was said that his dying words were, "Give my love to my colleagues and to the Irish people." His widow says this was not true. "He was incapable of an affectation so complete. The last words Parnell spoke," she says, "were given to the wife who had never failed him, to the love that was stronger than death—'Kiss me, sweet wifie, and I will try to sleep a little.'" "I lay down by his side," she continues, "and kissed the burning lips he pressed to mine for the last time. The fire of them, fierce beyond any I had ever felt, even in his most loving moods, startled me; and as

I slipped my hand under his head, he gave me a little sigh and became unconscious."‡

Thus passed away the one leader of dynamic genius that Ireland had, so far, produced, the most original and the most commanding. He was laid to rest at Glasnevin close to the grave of O'Connell, his only compeer, though the two had but one quality in common—devotion to Ireland. There was widespread and genuine national sorrow. The funeral on Sunday, October 11, 1891, was attended by tens of thousands of mourners. Muffled drums rolled and throbbed to the sobbing and wailing of old Gaelic laments, as for a great Irish chieftain, fallen in the wars. " They always went forth to battle," as the old saying has it, " and they always fell." Round about Parnell's grave were buried other nationalist leaders, constitutional and revolutionary, who, like him, had been baffled and defeated, resting in the deep sleep of death, fretted no longer by their country's troubles. But "finis" was not written on any of their tombs. The glowing epitaphs told rather of the enduring passion of each succeeding generation to carry on the struggle, even though it might be their fate also not to see the Dawn.

‡" Charles Stewart Parnell—His Love Story and Political Life," Vol. 2, pp. 275—6.

CHAPTER XIX.

SEED TIME.

From the sacrifice of Parnell no political advantage was derived by Ireland. Most afflicting though it was at the time, over a quarter of a century elapsed before its utter poignancy, and its purposelessness, could be fully realised. This was when Lord Morley—the John Morley of the "Parnell Crisis"—published his *Recollections* and disclosed the haphazard and casual way that the Gladstone letter—out of which the tragedy arose—was written. Morley states that Gladstone gave him the draft of the letter at the table of a London dinner-party. Greatly to his surprise, it did not contain the vital declaration that Parnell's retention of the leadership of the Irish Party would deprive Gladstone's own leadership of the Liberals of any force or efficacy. So he said to Gladstone, "But you have not put in the very thing that would be most likely of all things to move Parnell." On that, Gladstone rose from the dinner-table and wrote the paragraph on a slip of his host's notepaper.

Gladstone, after the publication of the letter, remarked tc Morley that he thought the insertion was to have appeared not in the body of the letter but as a postcript. "No," Morley replied; "it really was not. I marked the place in pencil at

the moment." "Just imagine," says Morley, in comment on the incident—" 'P.S.—By the way, I forgot to mention that if he does not go my leadership of the Liberal Party is reduced to a nullity.' " "What a postcript, to be sure!" is Morley's exclamation.* But was not a postscript really the proper place for this after-thought of Gladstone, or this new view suggested to him by another person? Gladstone, perhaps, remembered that for years he had worked in collaboration with Parnell, through the agency of Mrs. O'Shea, the nature of whose relations with Parnell he was well aware of. Had the circumstances in which the fateful letter was written been known to the Nationalists, they would hardly have hounded their leader to death for the sake of a " P.S." of English statesmanship, thus so inconsequentially decided upon.

At the General Election of 1892, the Parnellites were reduced to nine; the anti-Parnellites increased to about seventy, and the Liberals were returned to power, with Gladstone again Prime Minister. John Redmond's loyalty to Parnell and his ability marked him out as the leader of the little band of Parnellites. So far, he was undistinguished in the House of Commons. But he made a great name as a debater in the discussions on the Home Rule Bill of 1893 (by which Gladstone again tried to settle the Irish question), criticising it on the ground that it did not go far enough, but not actually opposing it. The Bill passed through the

*Viscount Morley, "Recollections" (1917), Vol. 1, pp. 259—261.

House of Commons, and was thrown out by the Lords. Gladstone thereupon brought his great public career to an end.

Ireland may be said at this juncture to have turned her back on parliamentary politics. Parnell in the years of his supremacy caused an extraordinary upheaval in Irish public life, which, on his fall—like the disappearance of a great mountain—subsided into a flat, dull and monotonous plain. Close on ten years elapsed before the two sections of the Irish Party, Parnellite and anti-Parnellite, came together again. This period, and indeed the decade of years which followed the political reunion, saw the sowing of new ideas out of which an entirely different Ireland came into being. It was then that the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein arose, the one national, in the broad sense of the word, the other political, and extremely nationalist. All the Sinn Feiners were Gaelic Leaguers. But all the Gaelic Leaguers were not Sinn Feiners. Far from it, indeed. Sinn Fein was, for many years, a small movement, in point both of numbers and influence. The Gaelic League, on the other hand, embraced the entire country. All politics, Unionist and Nationalist, all classes, high and low, the peer as well as the peasant, were members of it. Inspired by the national spirit in its non-political sense, it was desirous of reviving the ancient language of the country, its music, literature, art, customs, and thus make Ireland thoroughly Irish, "neither Saxon nor Italian," without at the same time,

having any idea—so far, at least, as its proclaimed objects, and the thought of its chief supporters, were concerned—of separation from England. But the effect of the movement was to heighten, deepen and make still more acute, the national consciousness of the separate and distinct individuality of Ireland, and its inevitable tendency was to seek for the determination of the spirit it aroused in the completest form of independent government. Therefore, it was very natural that the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein should, in time, work together in harness. These disintegrating movements were beyond the control and outside the influences of the Nationalists. Thus the Home Rule movement went its isolated way.

The Parnellites under Redmond, "Independent Nationalists" as they came to call themselves, were bound together by links of concord and amity. The larger body of the Nationalists, led by Justin McCarthy, and called in Parnellite circles "the Carties," were in a constant state of internal confusion and disruption caused by cross-currents of opinion, and particularly by the personal quarrels of their chief members. The rival sections, led by T. M. Healy on the one side, and William O'Brien and John Dillon on the other, seemed more bent on destroying each other than saving their country. But really each was convinced that the other must be driven out of public life before the country could be regenerated. Thomas Sexton, a sensitive man, unable to stand the strain of the antagonisms of his colleagues, availed of the dis-

solution of Parliament in 1895, to disappear into the quietude and oblivion of private life. In the following year, Justin McCarthy resigned his leadership and his seat, and, being a poor man because of his absorption in politics, was granted an allowance of £250 a year from the Civil List by Arthur James Balfour, who was Prime Minister. John Dillon then succeeded to the leadership of the main Nationalist body.

In 1898 the majority and the minority approached one another with a view to re-union. T. M. Healy suggested a settlement between the two sections on a basis which would give John Redmond the chairmanship of the united Irish Party. At the usual meeting of the majority to elect a chairman at the opening of the parliamentary session of 1899, John Dillon declined to allow his name to be proposed for the office, so that the way might be left clear for re-uniting the nationalist representatives into one party "on the lines of the Parnellite Party, as it existed from 1885 to 1890." A year passed, and at the opening of the session of 1900 the two sections met in a room at the House of Commons for the first time since the deposition of Parnell, formed themselves into one Party, and unanimously appointed Redmond to the chair.

But differences between leaders on questions of principle soon broke out afresh. T. M. Healy was expelled from the Party. One other result was the disappearance of three typical Irish members who for years had been prominent figures in this history—John Barry, the business man; T. D.

Sullivan, the popular balladist; Arthur O'Connor, the lawyer. The three were Healyites; and as such they resigned or lost their seats. Arthur O'Connor afterwards became a Judge of County Courts, first of Durham and next of Dorset. Members of the Parnellite group who had failed to get re-elected after the "Split" were brought back. Among them were James J. O'Kelly and John O'Connor. The Party obtained other notable recruits. I can mention only a few—Stephen Gwynn, grandson of William Smith O'Brien, leader of the Young Irelanders, and himself a man of letters—poet, novelist and essayist; Hugh Law, son of a Lord Chancellor of Ireland; John P. Boland, and John J. Mooney, both sons of Dublin merchants, all good parliamentarians, who might well have hoped under Home Rule to have charge of departments in the Irish Government. The reputation of the Irish Party for humour was sustained by the coming of Jeremiah MacVeagh. A man of strong individuality of character appeared in the person of Arthur Lynch—physician, scientist, author—who had been Colonel of the Irish Brigade No. II. on the Boer side in the South African War, and was sentenced to be hanged, drawn and quartered for high treason. But for debating power, and that quality which we call personality, the most notable accession to the Party was Joseph Devlin, of Belfast, the one really democratic Irish leader since the fitful and rather embarrassed appearance of Michael Davitt in the Irish quarter of the House of Commons soon

after the "Split." Thus did the succeeding generations of talented and able Irishmen under the Nationalist Movement, pursue the cause of Ireland according to their lights, with single, self-sacrificing mind, and pass away without the consolation of feeling that the realization of their aim was brought in any way the nearer.

CHAPTER XX.

"REDMOND THE DICTATOR."

John Redmond was a great parliamentarian in every sense of the word. During the eighteen years that he led the Irish Party, from 1900 to 1918, he was one of the most distinguished and esteemed members of the House of Commons by reason of his character and eloquence. By right of his position he had an undisputed claim to the same seat. The places of other eminent members constantly changed, according as the chances of General Elections put them in office or in opposition. But Redmond was always to be seen in that prominent corner seat of the fourth bench below the gangway on the Opposition side. His followers were massed on the same bench, and on the two immediately beneath it. The Nationalists sat in that quarter since the days of Parnell, whether the Liberals or the Unionists were in power, in order to demonstrate that as a Party they were separate and independent and unrelated to British politics. Their consequence and influence in the House was largely to be traced to this permanency of opposition to all Governments until Home Rule was granted; and never had they shown more capacity and readiness to make themselves disagreeable and inconvenient, to all and

sundry whom they regarded as foes of Ireland, than under Redmond's leadership.

The figure and appearance of a man tell in the making of an enduring and true impression on the House of Commons. As the Nationalist leader rose to speak, it was at once seen that he had a striking presence. In habit or mien he had a tendency to portliness. The face was strong. It is said that in the features of most people there is a hint of some animal or bird. The Roman nose and piercing eye of Redmond suggested the eagle. There was also something of the beat of the eagle's wings in his sustained flights of lofty eloquence. Indeed, since debating had assumed more and more the qualities of good conversation, Redmond might truly be described as the only orator in the House of Commons of his time. His mode of speech was far removed, however, from the ornate, flowery, and passionate, which have come to be associated with Irish declamation. Nor, on the other hand, was it stiff or formal or severe, like so much of the oratory of the British school.

Redmond's speeches were models of lucid and consecutive exposition. The diction was pure, the reasoning terse and penetrating. There were also emotional passages, when the subject lent itself to the expression of feeling. Redmond, furthermore, was a perfect elocutionist. The voice was melodious, of a fine compass, and well modulated. Consequently, his speeches were made all the more telling that they fell pleasantly on the listening ear. They had the qualities of lucidity of arrangement,

correctness of language, argumentative power. Above all, their persuasiveness was most marked. This was the outcome of Redmond's sincerity and earnestness. That surge of deep emotion, with its appealing, moving note, merging often into melancholy pathos, at once arrested the attention of the House, retained it throughout the speech, and won sympathy and influence. Redmond always had a large as well as an appreciative audience. I heard all the chief speeches made by him in the House of Commons, and my memory of the scene is invariably the same—the figure of the Irish leader standing conspicuously at the gangway corner of the top bench on the Opposition side, his notes in his hand, swaying as he spoke, the voice resonant and musical, the Chamber crowded in every part with a most attentive audience, deeply impressed by his loftiness of spirit and elevation of mind.

Redmond's direction as leader was superb. He could initiate and inspire policy, he could command obedience and discipline. As well as being a fine parliamentary debater, he was a great parliamentary tactician. He was imbued with the spirit of the rules, regulations, and usages of the House of Commons, and understood its idiosyncrasies. He knew the way to treat the Assembly, on every occasion, in order to gain his ends. Though he was disposed always to be conciliatory, and never was wanting in courtesy, he could take a strong line when the demand for it arose, and be unyielding in following it out. With his Party his position as leader was unquestioned, founded as it

was on the confidence of his followers, because of his devotion to the cause, his watchfulness of its interests, his gifts of intellect and character.

Redmond, in fact, had come to be called by the Unionists, "Dictator of the House of Commons," for his decisive action, notably in the stormy sessions of the Liberal Parliaments when the third Home Rule Bill was under consideration. Did he not tell the Asquith Government that they would have to "toe the line"? It was due to the pressure which he put upon the Government that the Parliament Bill was introduced, abolishing the veto of the House of Lords on measures which had passed three times through the House of Commons, and that the Lords were compelled to agree to it in 1911 by the announcement made by Lord Morley that if it were defeated the King, George V., would assent to the creation of a sufficient number of peers to carry it when it was again presented.

Redmond was most regular in his attendance during these sessions of constant excitement and confusion. If he was not present at prayers, he always came in early during question-time. How often in those days did I see him appear through the swing-doors under the clock, a bunch of violets —his favourite flower—in the button-hole of his frock-coat, pass up the floor and bow to the Speaker before turning to the right to ascend the gangway to his seat. The Nationalist members had on their benches in those sessions such neighbours as the extremist and most uncompromising of Ulster and English Unionists. Looking down

from the Reporters' Gallery I have witnessed many exciting incidents which sprang from this propinquity of elements so antagonistic, and restless. In the heat of debate, and the conflict of cheers which it evoked, men sitting cheek by jowl would glare into each other's faces, and above the din there reached my ears such expressions as " what the," " who the," and " why the," with the expletives used in extreme anger which in print are decorously represented by ——— and ——— and ———. On such occasions Redmond exercised a restraining influence. He was all for order and decorum in the conduct of debate.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOME RULE ON THE STATUTE BOOK.

The United Kingdom appeared to be drifting towards the catastrophe of civil war, or, at the best, grave political disturbances. In Ireland the Ulster Volunteers and the National Volunteers faced each other in enmity, each reckoned to be about 200,000 strong, and each certainly containing a large proportion of young fighting men, drilled, armed and equipped and very determined. Trustees and others were transferring securities from Ireland to Great Britain. Preparations were being made in England and Scotland for the reception and housing of fugitive women, children and old men from Ulster. The British Army, which was supposed to stand neutral between the two sides, and be the ready instrument of the Government for the impartial enforcement of the law, had given indications, publicly, in defiance of all discipline, that sections of it were Unionist and sections Nationalist. There was something like a revolt of Unionist officers on the Curragh of Kildare. In the summer of 1914, I saw a company of the Irish Guards, as they were passing the Houses of Parliament, produce small green flags with the yellow harp from under their tunics, put them into the muzzles of their rifles and wave them on high.

Suddenly into this scene of political turmoil and disruption appeared the still more terrifying

spectre of the Great War. What would Ireland do? "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," said Daniel O'Connell, sixty years before. The policy of the Fenians, after the failure of the insurrection of 1867, was secretly to enroll, drill and arm, until some great trouble befell England, when they would rise and once more try to win national independence by force of arms. Constitutional leaders, like Isaac Butt and A. M. Sullivan, had several times prophesied that if, when England's hour of real peril came, the aspiration of Ireland for self-government was unsatisfied, Irish disaffection would weaken England's arm in the struggle for her existence. They warned, rather than threatened. Both of them were sincere admirers of England, as well as true lovers of Ireland.†

Parnell hated England, and all the more on that account, as well as for the sake of Ireland, he desired—at least in the earlier part of his career—to see her involved in a European War. During his visit to the United States with Dillon in 1880, to collect funds for the Land League, Parliament was suddenly dissolved, and hastening home to conduct operations in the General Election, he was very angry to find on landing that the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain had issued an appeal to the Irish electors in English and Scottish constituencies to vote for the Liberal in all cases. This was a departure from the settled policy of

†"Irish Federalism," by Isaac Butt (1870), pp. 45—46. "Speeches and Addresses of A M. Sullivan" (1884), pp. 55—58.

the Confederation, which was to support Conservative or Liberal, according as one or the other declared in favour of Home Rule. The change in tactics was decided upon because of Beaconsfield's declaration in his election manifesto that the Home Rule movement was "a danger in its ultimate results scarcely less disastrous than pestilence and famine." In these circumstances no pledge was to be asked for from any candidate. Every Irish vote was to be cast against the Conservative, "though he were a Fenian into the bargain," as the appeal of the Home Rule Confederation expressed it. Parnell saw A. M. Sullivan, who had aided and abetted in this course of action. "He told me," says Sullivan, "it would have been infinitely better for Ireland to keep the Conservatives in power, as Lord Beaconsfield would infallibly bring England into some disastrous European complication, the occurrence of which would be the signal for concessions to Ireland far beyond anything Gladstone would ever conceive."‡

Here, then, was England in dire peril. Here was the situation which Ireland had so often been told by her leaders was to yield her the golden opportunity of achieving her long cherished desire. How would it be handled by John Redmond? The question was answered in the House of Commons, on August 3, 1914. It was one of the great and fateful sittings of Parliament. Members assembled, knowing that the entry of England into the war had been decided upon, and the prevailing

‡"New Ireland" (popular edition), p. 447.

mood was brooding anxiety, or sombre acquiescence. I was in the Reporters' Gallery that evening, and I have rarely seen a more crowded Chamber. Chairs were placed on the floor for the accommodation of members who could not find places on the benches or in the galleries. Only on two other occasions had that been done—the introduction by Gladstone of the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893.

The Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, made the momentous announcement. One passage in his speech took the House by surprise. It had a stirring effect, though its full meaning and significance was not understood until later in the proceedings. "The one bright spot in the whole of this terrible situation is Ireland," he said. "The general feeling throughout Ireland—and I would like this to be clearly understood abroad—does not make the Irish question a consideration which we feel we have now to take into account." Germany, in fact, was led to believe that England, torn and distracted by her domestic troubles, would keep out of the war.

Redmond rose from his seat at the corner of the top bench below the gangway. The crowded House hung upon his words with breathless interest. Would he confirm the statement of the Foreign Secretary that Ireland would not weaken England's arm in this supreme crisis? He did not long keep the House in suspense. It was a short speech. He began by saying, in those deeply moving accents of his, that he was touched

by the Foreign Secretary's reference to Ireland. In times past when the Empire was engaged in desperate enterprises, he pointed out, that "for reasons to be found deep down in the centuries of history" Ireland was estranged. But the events of recent years, had, he said, changed that situation completely. Then followed the most important pronouncement of the speech. It was read slowly and deliberately, from half-sheets of note-paper. This showed that Redmond did not act merely upon a passing impulse induced by Grey's reference to Ireland. Whether or not he had been approached by the Government beforehand, he certainly came to the House with his speech carefully prepared and written out:—

"A wider knowledge of the real facts of Irish history, have, I think, altered the views of the democracy of this country towards the Irish question; and to-day, I honestly believe, that the democracy of Ireland will turn with the utmost anxiety and sympathy to this country in every trial and every danger that may overtake it."

The House was swept by wave after wave of enthusiasm. Both sides, Liberals and Unionists, joined in loud and prolonged cheers, which were emphasised by the shriller Gaelic note of the Nationalists, who sat, in full array, on the benches below their leader. Redmond went on to recall that in 1778, during the war between England and America, 100,000 Irish Volunteers sprang to arms in defence of their country against invasion.

"History is repeating itself," he cried, raising his voice. Two Volunteer forces were in existence in Ireland—one, Protestant and Unionist, the other, Catholic and Nationalist. Why should they not emulate the example of their predecessors? Redmond proceeded to make this offer to the Government, amid approving cheers:—

"I say to the Government that they may to-morrow withdraw everyone of their troops from Ireland. I say that the coast of Ireland will be defended from foreign invasion by her armed sons, and for this purpose armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with Protestant Ulstermen in the North."‖

Thus did Redmond give a new interpretation to O'Connell's dictum, "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity." He had two objects in view. First, the conciliation of Ireland and England by co-operation in the War; and secondly, union among Irishmen by the joint action of North and South in the field against Germany for universal freedom and civilization. Was Redmond wise in so doing? Would it have been better for Ireland had he acted otherwise; if he had said—"We'll fight for you if you give us Home Rule"? These were questions that were hotly discussed in Ireland before two years had passed. They will probably arouse conflicting opinions among Irishmen for many generations to come. Irish history has provided many a puzzle of the kind for posterity to

‖"Parliamentary Debates" (fifth series), Vol. 515, pp. 1820—29.

wrangle about. But there is another question which, so far as I had noticed, was not then asked. What would Redmond's predecessors in the constitutional movement, O'Connell, Butt and Parnell, have done in like circumstances? It is certain, I think, that O'Connell and Butt would have advised Ireland to come to the aid of England. There may reasonably be a doubt as to Parnell's action. My own opinion is that he would probably have advised Ireland not to lift a hand to assist England in such a crisis had it arisen during the Disraeli Parliament, 1875 to 1880, or the Gladstone Parliament, 1880 to 1885, when Ireland was denied any satisfaction of her national aspirations, and disloyalty, obstruction, and passive resistance, appeared to be the only weapons at the disposal of the people at all effective for the advancement of her cause. Parnell might also have taken up that attitude, had the occasion for it arisen, during the brief contest over his leadership, when he was appealing for support to all the extreme elements in Ireland. But I feel sure that even he, the boldest, most daring and revolutionary constitutional leader Ireland has ever had, would have done exactly as Redmond did, any time between Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, April, 1886, and Gladstone's letter on the leadership of the Irish Party in December, 1890. A comparison of the speeches made by Parnell during those four years with his earlier speeches show that the adoption of Home Rule by the Liberal Party made quite a profound change in his views as regards England.

Yet Parnell had but the contingent promise that should the Liberals be again returned to power they would reintroduce Home Rule. Redmond, on the other hand, had the Home Rule Bill passed by the House of Commons, and the certainty that it would be carried over the heads of the Lords, despite their opposition, by means of the Parliament Act, and then receive the Royal Assent. Furthermore, he was confident that by pledging Ireland to support the War he had secured that at the end of the conflict, a Parliament, with jurisdiction over an undivided Ireland, would be opened in Dublin amid the united hosannahs of North and South.

The greatest day in Redmond's career was September 19, 1914. It was also the red-letter day of the Irish Nationalist Movement. On that day the Home Rule Bill was made law, subject to the condition that it was not to come into operation until the conclusion of Peace. The scenes in the two Houses of Parliament, accompanying the giving of the Royal Assent, were unprecedented for irregularity as well as exaltation of feeling, in those ancient and solemn precincts. As I viewed the spectacle in the House of Lords from the Reporters' Gallery, I saw an empty Chamber, save that at the top, seated on a form under the Throne, were the Lords Commissioners, five in number, arrayed in their scarlet robes, slashed with white bars of ermine, and their black three-cornered hats. They were to give the Royal Assent on behalf of the King. The centre figure was Haldane the

Lord Chancellor. At the table in the middle of the Chamber were also two clerks in wig and gown. But there was no one on the benches, rising tier over tier, on each side—no, not a single peer. It was easy to understand why the Unionist Lords should have stayed away. But how can the absence of the Liberal Lords be explained? Nevertheless, every part of the Chamber, except that technically within the House, was crowded. In the galleries of the Commons, to the right and left of the Reporters' Gallery, I saw many Nationalists mixed with Liberals. Looking down at the Bar of the House, immediately beneath the Reporters' Gallery, I could discern the portly form of John Redmond, with T. P. O'Connor, William Redmond and other colleagues, grouped behind the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Whitley) who stood in the front with Black Rod to his right and the Sergeant-at-Arms to his left.

Then the ceremony commenced, one of the most ancient and stereotyped in the procedure of Parliament. But on this occasion a new formula was introduced, one that had never been heard before. That was the announcement by the Lord Chancellor that the Royal Assent was to be notified to an Act which had been "duly passed under the provisions of the Parliament Act of 1911." The supreme moment of the ceremony had come. The Clerk of the Crown, standing to the left of the table, took up a printed document and in a loud voice read its title—"Government of Ireland Act." The Clerk of the Parliament, standing to the right

of the table, turned and bowed to the Commons at the Bar, and pronounced the decisive words—"Le Roy le veult," the King wills it! Instantly from the Bar and the galleries arose a cheer that was loud and long continued. Again and again the Nationalists in the galleries gave vocal expression to the joy that beamed on their faces. John Dillon, who sat amongst them, a striking figure, so grey as to be almost venerable, was, I noticed, quite unmoved. His grave face betrayed no emotion. Was he, like a seer, trying to peer into the future?—wondering whether this was really the end, whether Ireland's hopes were, at last, accomplished.

I hastened downstairs to the Lobby, or anteroom of the Chamber. It was thronged by an excited crowd. Redmond was surrounded by Liberal and Labour members, pressing to grasp him by the hand, and congratulate him upon his great victory. Would he not be, in a year or so, the first Prime Minister of an Irish National Government? Suddenly a flash of green and a golden harp appeared over the heads of the crowd. It was the Irish flag raised by Patrick O'Brien; and following in its wake, the Commons, loudly cheering, streamed along the corridors to their own Chamber. Here there was another extraordinary scene. The Deputy Speaker announced, according to custom, that he had been to the House of Peers and heard the Royal Assent given to the Government of Ireland Act. And scarcely had the applause which greeted the announcement died

down, when Will Crooks, the Labour member, called out in Cockney accents, which trembled with emotion, "Would it be in order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to sing 'God Save the King?'" Singing in the House of Commons! An unheard of thing! Yet, without waiting for a reply, Crooks started the anthem. All the members rose to their feet and joined in, and the strain was swelled by journalists in the Reporters' Gallery, and strangers in the public galleries at the opposite end of the Chamber. An extraordinary and exciting episode, and it had a dramatic conclusion. "God Save Ireland!" cried Crooks. Quick came the response in the vibrant voice of John Redmond—"God Save England!" It was the first time such an ejaculation came from the lips of a Nationalist leader. Cheer after cheer rang through the House of Commons.

CHAPTER XXII.

WHAT THE IRISH PARTY ACCOMPLISHED.

The Irish Party was unique among political parties for its rare and extraordinary vicissitudes of fortune and for its wonderful success, nevertheless, in its aims and objects. It did a great service to representative institutions and constitutional agitation in all democratically governed countries. It vindicated the efficacy of the vote; and proved that the best arena for the advancement of political progress and social reform in any land is the House or Assembly in which the elected representatives of the people meet to make laws for the Nation.

The most signal triumph of the Irish Party was the placing of the Home Rule Act on the Statute Book, by and with the consent of the King, Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled. A right appreciation of its greatness from the Nationalist point of view, is, perhaps, possible only to those who were in the movement, at its heart, or were very close spectators of it; and who, therefore, knew how formidable were the obstacles to its realisation that were raised by the opposition of Ulster, backed by the Unionist Party, the most influential and the wealthiest of all British political organizations. Nor was that all. To repeat what I have already said, John Redmond had every

reason to hope and believe that, had all gone well, had Ireland, for once, escaped the malice of Fate, Irish Nationalists and Irish Unionists, having fought side by side on the field of battle for freedom and right, would settle their ancient differences, and that at the end of the War a Parliament would be set up for a united Ireland amid general acclamations.

But apart from the question of an Irish Parliament, the Home Rulers, by their agitation in the House of Commons and out of it, compelled, or induced, the two rival British Parties, Unionist as well as Liberal, to pass great Acts of Parliament for the good of Ireland exclusively. What makes this success all the more remarkable is the fact that some of the measures ran counter to political principles and religious prejudices which both British parties were agreed, more or less, in thinking, should be maintained in legislation. Could there be anything more contrary to the individualistic theory—at one time so generally accepted in England—that the State should not interfere with the disposal of property by its owners, than the transference by purchase compulsorily, in some cases, of the soil of Ireland from the landlords to the occupiers by means of money advanced by the Treasury. And surely the establishment of the National University under conditions that inevitably secured for it an atmosphere not only Irish of the Irish but Roman Catholic—indirectly but yet intentionally—was, in effect, an evasion of the Protestant belief that any State assistance to the

higher education of Roman Catholics amounted to the endowment of religious error and political reaction? Thus the Irish Party had a profound influence on British political thought and policy.

The Land Purchase Act and the Universities Act were perhaps the boldest measures passed for Ireland by the Imperial Parliament. Indeed, it is not certain that they could have been carried under Home Rule, had Home Rule been granted with the limitations to the powers of the Irish Parliament which were contemplated by Gladstone. Of course, the Irish Parliament could not have been always subjected to the supreme control of the Imperial Parliament. Like all representative institutions it would have been susceptible to the impulse of independent development both from within and without. But at any rate an endowment of Roman Catholicism was debarred by Gladstone's two Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893; and what this prohibition was specially intended to guard against was the founding of a Roman Catholic University. Coupled with the Home Rule scheme of 1886 was a Land Purchase Bill for the buying out of the landlords who desired to sell at twenty years' purchase of the rent, which was to be repaid by the tenants, principle and interest, in forty-nine years at 4 per cent. Gladstone had hoped that the opposition of the House of Lords to Home Rule would be mitigated if the landlords, instead of being left to the uncertain mercies of the Irish Parliament, were helped to sell their land at a high figure beforehand. By the second Home Rule Bill

of 1893 the land question was reserved to the Imperial Parliament for three years when, if still unsettled, it was to pass to the proposed Irish Parliament. That the Irish Parliament would have been unable to raise the hundred millions sterling, and more, required to buy out the landlords is highly probable; and though many people in Ireland agreed with Michael Davitt that all the landlords were morally entitled to, having regard to their cruel oppressions, was a single ticket, third-class, to Holyhead, confiscation would not have been thought of; or, if it were, could never have been tolerated by England.

But however that may be, the Irish legislation of the Imperial Parliament constitutes a most remarkable record of reforms, and, as such, is a splendid testimony to the potency of the Irish Party as a parliamentary machine. The legislation includes a large number of permanent first-class Acts, as well as several emergency measures of a passing value.

The first Irish Party, under Butt, had in the forefront of their programme, second only to Home Rule, denominational education, or education permeated with Catholic beliefs and ideals in the years of youth's greatest mental development. Ireland then had two universities—Dublin with Trinity College, founded by Queen Elizabeth; and Queen's (called after Victoria) with colleges at Cork, Galway and Belfast, established by the Tory Government under Peel, about the middle of the nineteenth century. The one was Anglican; and

the other was secular. "Godless" was the epithet applied to the Queen's by the Catholic Hierarchy. Attendance at its colleges was said to be dangerous to faith and morals. The result was that Catholic youths, in the main, had no means of developing to the full their intellectual capacities and obtaining university degrees. Yielding to the pressure of the Irish Party under Butt, the Disraelian Government tried to formulate a settlement. In 1879 they abolished the Queen's—allowing, however, its three colleges to remain—and set up in its place the Royal, as an examining body for the conferring of degrees on men and women without any qualification as to residence in the university. The Royal was given an endowment of £20,000 out of the Church Surplus Fund, which had accrued from the disestablishment and disendowment of the Protestant Church in Ireland. The same Government, a year earlier—in 1878—also subsidised secondary education. Under the Intermediate Education Act the Lord Lieutenant for the time being was empowered to nominate a board for the purpose of administering in aid of intermediate education—education coming between the National Schools and the Universities—an income of about £80,000 a year (derived partly from the Church Fund and partly from the revenue raised in Ireland on whiskey) by making grants to managers of schools for each student, boy or girl, who passed in the subjects set for examination.

The Land Act of 1881 was the first fruits of the Parnellite Party. Gladstone brought it in and

saw it through Parliament. This great measure recognised that the tenant was part owner of the land with the landlord. It set up courts to fix the rent based on the letting value of the land, but minus the improvements of the occupier or his predecessors. As long as this judicial rent was paid by the tenant the landlord had no power to evict him; and if the tenant desired to quit his holding he had the right to sell his interest in it for what it would fetch in the open market. At the time, owing to a succession of bad seasons, most of the tenants were in arrears with their rents. To meet this situation the Arrears Act was passed in 1882. It affords an example of the temporary measures to which I have applied the term "emergency." No matter how much the tenant owed, by paying the rent for 1881 and one year of the arrears due—the State providing another year of the arrears out of the Church Surplus Fund—he got a clean receipt from the landlord. In these Acts the Imperial Parliament set aside the so-called "rights of property" which had been regarded as so sacrosanct and, furthermore, did the unheard of thing of applying the moneys of the State to relieving debtors of their obligations.

Parnell was always disposed to confine the agitation to Home Rule. In August, 1885, after the passing by Gladstone of the Reform Act establishing household suffrage in the United Kingdom, and of the accompanying Redistribution Act, which left the number of Irish seats undiminished, despite the strong opposition of English members,

Liberals as well as Conservatives, Parnell, speaking in Dublin on the eve of the General Election, declared that the platform of the Irish Party was to be reduced to a single plank—an Irish Parliament with an Irish Executive responsible to it. All other issues were to be subsidiary to this, Parnell said, and indeed he thought it would be far better to hold them over for settlement in an Irish Parliament. The immediate good, practical and material, never made any great appeal to Ireland. The people always were most unified and determined when the agitation was concentrated upon the national question. What is more, the establishment of an Irish Parliament never implied a scheme of regeneration on a grand scale. "Ireland a Nation" was regarded by the vast majority of its adherents, not as an expedient but as a fulfilment—a perfected and finished thing. It was to be a satisfaction of the desire for a separate national existence, and that was enough without any serious thought of what was to follow, if anything, in the way of social betterment. What the idealists desired for Ireland was a proud position in the world, a voice in the international councils of nations, backed by an Army and Fleet, and all the rest of what we now generally abhor as Jingoism, which, in the opinion of these dreamers, were the surest tokens of a great nation and a happy people.

Parnell's move in 1885 and Ireland's impressive response to it at the General Election led to an achievement by the Home Rulers which trans-

cended in importance all the others. This was the attraction to their side of William Ewart Gladstone, the greatest and noblest of English statesmen. It is sometimes said that Gladstone was simply an opportunist, and, as such, took up Home Rule for party ends—to attain to power, or to keep it, with the help of the Nationalist votes in the House of Commons. Gladstone was too fine and sincere a character to be influenced by a motive so questionable, if not altogether unworthy, if it implies the grasping of power for selfish ends, and not as an agency for the accomplishment of great things. He had a passion for human liberty, without distinction of race or colour. He took up Home Rule because he became convinced that in it alone was to be found the cure for the discontent and unrest of Ireland. He had hoped to be able to satisfy the Irish people by proving to them that it was possible to obtain from the Imperial Parliament everything they could reasonably desire or expect in the way of ameliorative legislation from a Parliament in Dublin. When he failed in that he turned to Home Rule. "Every plan we frame comes to Irishmen as an English plan, and as such is probably condemned," he wrote privately to Forster, the Chief Secretary, in 1882. He had given the Irish religious equality. He had freed them from the cruellest oppressions of the land system—rent-raising on tenants' improvements and eviction. Then he sought to restore to them their native Parliament, of which, in his opinion, they were foully robbed by the Union. He failed,

but the attempt to do this by so great a leader of so great a political party, made the thing certain in time.

Arthur James Balfour, as Chief Secretary, in the first Unionist Government, did not rely entirely upon coercion for the pacification of Ireland. In fact, most of the important social measures which are rightly to be ascribed to the political pressure exercised by the Irish Party in and out of Parliament were passed by the Unionists during their long terms of office. Balfour, in 1887, extended to leaseholders the benefit of having fair rents fixed, under the Land Act of 1881, greatly to the scandal of those who looked upon the breaking of contracts as a monstrous act of State injustice and tyranny. In 1891 a Land Purchase Act was carried, allocating £30,000,000 to enable tenants to become owners of their holdings, and arranging for the paying back of the sums advanced for the purpose, principal and interest, at 4 per cent. within a period of forty-nine years. Another measure brought in and passed by Balfour, was the Act creating the Congested Districts Board. This body, representative and popular in its membership, and in its acts free of control of Dublin Castle, regenerated areas of the West and South of Ireland that were wretchedly backward and overcrowded. It enlarged the holdings of the small cottiers; taught them better methods of tillage, improved the breed of their live stock, and gave assistance to deep-sea fishing and other struggling local industries. It also relieved the congestion in particular districts

by acquiring untenanted land elsewhere for some of the landless inhabitants of those districts. All this has been accomplished by means of a yearly income of £350,000 from public moneys.

When Arthur James Balfour became Prime Minister of the Unionist Government, his brother, Gerald Balfour, as Chief Secretary for Ireland, carried two outstanding Irish measures through Parliament. The first was the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898. Until then, the Grand Jury appointed by the High Sheriff of each county and consisting almost entirely of the landowning gentry, not only performed their proper function of investigating criminal charges returned for trial at the Assizes and deciding whether or not there was a "true Bill," in each case; but had the management of county affairs also and levied rates, or county cess, for the purpose. By the Act of 1898 the Grand Juries, as the county authorities, were abolished. Their fiscal and administrative powers were transferred to representative bodies, a county council for each county, and a district council for every poor law union within the county, elected on the same broad franchise as Members of Parliament. Even to make smooth the working of this measure of county government money was required, and once more the National Exchequer was resorted to. An annual sum of £750,000 was voted to ease the incidence of county taxation on both landlords and tenants. Previously the landlords had to pay half the rates for the relief of the poor levied on their estates. From this

burden they were entirely freed. The tenants were, in like manner, relieved of half the county cess, for the whole of which they had been liable.

The other great measure which Gerald Balfour had charge of in its passage through Parliament was the Act of 1899 founding the Department of Agriculture for the encouragement and development of the great industry out of which Ireland makes her living, with an income of £190,000 a year, in addition to the cost of administration being voted annually by Parliament. The plan was due chiefly to Horace Plunkett, though it was the agitation that brought it to fulfilment. And here it must be said that Ireland was fortunate in having a son like Plunkett, of the aristocratic and landowning class, possessed of practical ability in agricultural economics and insight as to the close relation of agriculture to social well-being, who, outside Nationalist politics, though he was intensely nationalist in the broad sense of the word, devoted himself to the uplifting of the farming class with a singleness of aim and a faithfulness to an idea uncommon even in a country noted for self-sacrificing patriotism.

George Wyndham, a rare character too early lost to politics, and a distinguished man of letters, had charge, as Chief Secretary, in 1903, of the Unionist scheme for the final settlement of the agrarian question by the transference of the agricultural land of Ireland from the owners to the occupiers entirely. The Land Purchase Act provided for the advancement by the State of

£100,000,000 as a beginning, to enable the tenants to buy, and an additional sum of £12,000,000 to be given to the landlords as a bonus of 12 per cent. on the purchase money, to induce them to sell. If the price of a holding, arrived at by agreement between landlord and tenant, was £500 the landlord was to get an additional £60 by way of bonus. The purchase money was to be repaid in 68 years, principle and interest at 3¼ per cent. This meant that the yearly annuities would be far below the current rents. It was a monumental Act of Parliament. It embodied the most advanced scheme of social reform that had ever been enacted. It was a striking tribute to the efficacy of constitutional agitation. It was a proud triumph for the Irish Party. It was remarkable also for the evidence it afforded of the desire of even the Unionist Party to make reparation for the mistakes of the past, to do anything for the pacification of Ireland short of what they called the disruption of the political fabric of the United Kingdom, which was the heart of the British Empire.

The Act was expected to have tremendous and far-reaching results. It gave rise to the brightest hopes. Irish discontent was supposed to have its root in the land. The animating spirit of the national movement, and its driving force, were said to be generated by the evils of landlordism. Now that the cultivators of the soil were made its owners, it was generally believed that they would settle down to quiet, simple, happy lives in the midst of their fruitful harvest fields, and be con-

cerned only to keep England plentifully supplied with the very best beef and mutton, butter and eggs and cheese. At last, as T. M. Healy exclaimed in the House of Commons, at the end of a moving panegyric of the Act—using one of Ireland's poetic designations—the tears were to be wiped from the beautiful eyes of Kathleen Ni Houlihan. The Act, certainly, had an immediately softening effect on the asperities of the political situation. It arose out of a conference of landowners and tenants, in December, 1902, which was convened by Captain Shaw Taylor, a young Galway landlord, presided over by Lord Dunraven, and attended by John Redmond and William O'Brien. If the land trouble could thus be settled by an amicable understanding come to by representatives of both sides exchanging views round a table, why should not an agreement on self-government be likewise sought in the same spirit of mediation and good will? This was a question which suggested itself to William O'Brien and T. M. Healy. They appeared in a role that was new to them, that of conciliator, but, in the altered circumstances, they filled it with the earnestness and enthusiasm of conviction. Eventually the All-for-Ireland League was founded by O'Brien to carry further the policy of national fellowship and unity—drawing all classes together to see if, forgetting old and senseless estrangements, they could not agree on a scheme of national government for their torn and distracted native land. But the majority of the

Nationalists held back. Led by John Dillon, they were distrustful and uncompromising.

The founding of the National University was, in its way, as remarkable a feat of legislation as the abolition of landlordism. Introduced and carried by Augustine Birrell, as the Chief Secretary of a Liberal Government, the Irish Universities Act of 1908 signified that for once the Nonconformist conscience was beguiled of its anti-Catholic prejudices and fears. Two new universities were established—one in Dublin called the National, having a new college in Dublin, together with the old Queen's Colleges at Cork and Galway; and another in Belfast, called the Belfast University, with a single college, the old Queen's in Belfast. The universities and their colleges were endowed out of the National Exchequer. The National University got £10,000 a year and a grant of £150,000 for buildings. Dublin College got £32,000; Cork £20,000; and Galway £12,000 a year. Belfast University got £10,000 a year and £60,000 for buildings; and its college got £28,000 a year. Neither university was to apply religious tests to its students. But a Catholic atmosphere in the National was assured by the senators of the university being elected or nominated in such a way as to make them in the main Catholic as well as Nationalist. Belfast University was, in practice, likewise assigned to the Presbyterians. This happy solution left to the Anglicans, Dublin University and Trinity College.

Another great reconciling measure passed by the same Liberal Government was the Act under which the tenants evicted in the far-off days of the Land League and the Plan of Campaign, or—in cases where they had passed away—their widows or children, were restored to their old holdings, or given holdings on untenanted lands of other estates. But perhaps the finest monument to the legislative achievements of the Irish Party is to be found in the 60,000 cottages, each with its acre of land, occupied at a shilling, or so, per week, by agricultural labourers, a class that had been truly described as the worst paid, the worst fed, the worst clad and the worst housed in the world. The old land system was vicious from top to bottom. The landlords robbed their tenants, and both united in robbing their labourers. The wages paid to the labourer were never more than a few shillings a week. He brought up his family in a mud cabin, on Indian meal stirabout and potatoes, with an occasional salted herring, or a piece of fat American bacon. Yet by the toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow he had established a triple ownership of the soil, carrying the right to share in the fruits of the soil proportionally with the landlord and the tenant. A farmer often shot his landlord for treatment no worse than both meted out to the labourer; and had the labourer been disposed also to resort to "the wild justice of revenge" the farmer, in turn, would have met with the fate of the landlord. But the labourers submitted to their hard lot with

the utmost patience and resignation. Rarely was a rumble of discontent heard from the agricultural underworld. Once in a long while a hayrick was set fire to, and that was all.

Then, by the exertions of the Irish Party, the boards of guardians, as the sanitary authority, were empowered, commencing in 1883, to provide cottages and plots of land for agricultural labourers, the money being advanced by the Exchequer, on loan, at favourable terms of repayment. Thus that ugly blot on the fair sweet face of Ireland, the mud cabin with a hole in the thatch for a chimney, gradually disappeared. The various statutes were crowned by the Labourers' (Ireland) Act, 1906—carried by James Bryce, the Chief Secretary of a Liberal Government—which simplified the procedure and reduced the cost. It allocated a sum of £4,250,000 for loans to rural district councils (the old boards of guardians) repayable in 68½ years at 3¼ per cent. covering principle and interest. The plot of land given with each cottage was increased from a half to a whole acre. Subsequently the benefit of this Act was extended to all manual workers in rural districts.

There was also the Old Age Pensions Act, under which thousands of aged people, men and women, were made passing rich on 5s. or 7s. 6d., a week, entailing an expenditure in Ireland of over £3,000,000 per annum. This most beneficent Act hardly comes within my theme, as the pension is a gift from the State, without a taint of a poor-law dole, to aged toilers in the whole United

Kingdom. The other measures which I have enumerated, were exclusive to Ireland. They show that the work of the Irish Party, far from being sterile—as was often asserted—was really fruitful in great Acts of Parliament tending to the social comfort and contentment of the people of Ireland. England, somehow, never thought at the same time of doing equally well to her own agricultural classes. Close on half a century after the Irish farmers got fixity of tenure and fair rents there was talk of having these benefits extended to the farmers of England.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

John Redmond had every reason to be satisfied —more than that, personally proud—of the response of Ireland to his appeal to make good the pledge he gave that she would come in all her martial ardour and strength to the side of England in the war for human freedom. The righteousness of the War was proclaimed in the Press and from the platform by the representatives of all shades of constitutional nationalism, by William O'Brien and T. M. Healy of the All-for-Ireland League, not less fervently than by John Dillon of the United Irish League, and Joseph Devlin of the Ancient Order of Hibernians. Nationalist Ireland took her stand by England in a war for the first time since the Union, for love of the cause which England had espoused. It was a revelation, indeed, and most astonishing to those who knew Ireland best —her constant brooding over her wrongs, and her feeling against England as the cause of them all.

Three Irish Divisions were raised—the 10th, a mixed one of Nationalists and Unionists, the former being the more numerous; the 16th, composed almost entirely of Catholics and Nationalists—at least in the rank and file—and the 36th, exclusively raised from the Ulster Volunteers, and therefore Unionist and Protestant. Thousands of young

Irishmen also joined the Irish Guards, the various Irish regiments in the Regular Army and also English and Scottish regiments. In fact, Ireland's voluntary recruiting was, in proportion to her population, as large as the voluntary recruiting of England in the first stages of the War.

One day in 1915 Redmond stood at the saluting-point with the King and Queen on the plain of Aldershot, and saw the march past of the 16th Irish Division, on the eve of its departure to fight the Germans in Flanders and France. Battalions of the famous regiments recruited from the South of Ireland—Royal Irish Regiment, Dublin Fusiliers, Munster Fusiliers, Connaught Rangers, Leinster Regiment—went by with bands of pipers wearing the saffron kilts of the ancient Gaels, playing national airs, and carrying green flags. At their head was a noble Irish wolfhound, a present from Redmond himself. In the marching files were two members of the Irish Party—William Redmond of the Royal Irish; Stephen Gwynn of the Connaughts, and a member of the All-for-Ireland Party, Daniel Sheehan of the Munsters. Redmond might well be pardoned if he saw in that stirring scene a personal triumph.

Soon afterwards there happened a most amazing and unexpected thing—the Republican Rebellion of Easter Week, 1916. Organised by the leaders of the Irish Volunteers (extreme Nationalist) and the Citizen Army (extreme Labour) permeated by the ideals of the Gaelic League, Sinn Fein, and Social Democracy—the latter making its first ap-

pearance in Irish politics—but most of all by the older Fenian belief in physical force, it was the revolutionary interpretation of "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," just as Redmond's had been the constitutional. Neither Birrell, the Chief Secretary, nor Redmond, the leader of the Irish Party, had the slightest suspicion that these undermining forces were at work awaiting the opportunity to explode beneath their feet, and blow their common policy to ruins. Then followed a period of unimaginable stress and strain for Redmond. An effort made by Lloyd George to bring the Home Rule Act immediately into operation, with the exclusion, until after the war, of six of the Ulster counties—which Redmond and Devlin had with difficulty induced Nationalist Ulster to agree to—was defeated by the Unionist Ministers in the Coalition Government. These Ministers had hailed Redmond a little while before as a great Imperialist patriot, but apparently they were unwilling to trust him as an Irish statesman. After that, the downfall of Redmond was sealed. If the working of Fate in Irish political affairs is usually malicious, how different and contradictory are the means by which it brings about its ends. Parnell fell because the Irish people did not believe him when he said, " British statesmanship is not to be trusted." Redmond was overthrown because he told the Irish people, by implication, if not directly, " Have confidence in British statesmanship." The country, broken and alienated by disappointment and delay, and falling naturally more and more under the

influence of the Republicans, turned upon him as the man who at the outbreak of the War could have compelled the Government to set up an Irish Parliament, and—so it was asserted—was too nerveless to use the force at his command. But, to the end, Redmond upheld the wisdom of the action he took at that critical juncture of affairs, domestic and international. "If the moment came back," he said, "I would do the same again."

Never was Irish leader so sorely tried and so sorely used as Redmond. Blow after blow fell upon him in quick succession. In June, 1917, his brother, Major William Redmond—first favourite of the House of Commons—fell leading his men of the Royal Irish Regiment in the attack on Wytschcate Wood. For the vacant seat in Clare, de Valera, the leader of the Republican Party, was elected by a majority of 3,000 over the nominee of the Irish Party. Redmond, shortly before that, had lost a daughter in America. He was unable to go to her in her last illness, because of the war. Patrick O'Brien, the colleague who was the most intimate with him, also passed away. These domestic afflictions befell him at a time when the calls of an unexampled crisis in the national cause demanded all his attention as leader. Care sat heavily upon him. The face became haggard and wrinkled; the jaws flabby and fallen. He had all the appearance of a man disappointed and sick unto death. But he never gave in.

He welcomed the appointment by Lloyd George, Prime Minister, in July, 1917, of a Convention

of representative Irishmen, meeting in Dublin to try to work out a scheme of self-government by agreement. For seven months he attended regularly the sittings of the Convention. He set himself out to win the trust of the Unionists. It was the first time the Unionists of Ulster and southern Ireland had met him. His engaging appearance, his cultured and conciliatory manners, his earnest and noble character, his eloquence, his broad and statesmanlike views, made him a notable figure at the Convention; and many misunderstandings as to his policy and motives were dispelled. But though the Ulstermen got to respect him and acknowledge his high purpose, they refused to yield their convictions or prejudices to his arguments. Then late in February, 1918, he was stricken with a painful malady and went back to London. He left Ireland knowing that an agreed settlement was impossible, for however sincere might be the general desire to reach it, a way to reach it unitedly could not be found. Unionist delegates from Ulster adhered unwaveringly to their declaration—"We will not have Home Rule." Redmond died in a nursing home, after an operation, on March 6, 1918. One of his last utterances was a remark to Father Bernard Vaughan, the Jesuit—"Father, I am a broken-hearted man." He was buried in the family vault at Wexford.

John Dillon succeeded to the chairmanship of the Irish Party. He had given even a longer service to the cause than Redmond. He was at the inception of the Home Rule movement by Butt.

To him fell the task of leading the Party in its last electoral fight. The General Election was held in December, 1918, under an extended franchise—practically manhood suffrage with votes for all wives and women over thirty qualified by residence. Only six Nationalists were returned. John Dillon was not among them. The Republicans swept the country. Seventy-three of their candidates were returned. They were pledged to refuse to take their seats at Westminster. William O'Brien and T. M. Healy, and the other members of the All-for-Ireland Party, decided to yield all the Cork constituencies which they held to the Republicans. The successful Nationalists included Joseph Devlin, Falls Division, Belfast; Jeremiah MacVeagh, South Down; and Captain Redmond, D.S.O., of the Irish Guards, who won his father's seat for Waterford City—a striking personal victory—and was the only member of the old Party elected in the south of Ireland. Another Nationalist was returned in England—T. P. O'Connor for his old constituency, the Scotland Division of Liverpool. Seven, all told, survived out of eighty. It was the most crushing defeat of a Party at the polls to be found recorded in political history.

Why did the country thus turn up and rend the Party which carried the great reforms described in the preceding chapter? The main cause was the resurgence after the Rebellion of 1916, in a fresh and more powerful form than ever before, of the country's predominant passion for a separate

national existence. It was true to say that the Irish question was as much economic as it was political. But as I have already intimated more than once—and the fact cannot be too often or too strongly emphasised—legislation for material improvement, however great, was but dust in the balance when weighed against the national sentiment. Moreover, most Nationalists took the view that the Irish Acts passed by the Imperial Government were no more than a slight reparation for past injustices, and therefore, no more called for thankfulness or gratitude than does the payment of 10s. in the pound in redemption of an old debt. Others again looked with positive disfavour upon these measures. They were afraid the effect on the national character would be debilitating, that the people's sense of self-reliance and responsibility would be weakened. They repudiated any suggestion that Ireland, because she was agricultural and poor, might well be content to be spoon-fed by industrial and wealthy England. They wanted the country to be independent of England and self-supporting, even if it meant an increase of taxation, heavier duties on whiskey and tea, and less social amelioration. "We are ready to pay for national freedom, as well as die for it," they said.

Then came the transfiguration caused by the Great War. What immense aspirations it aroused the world over! How petty the political and social reforms of the past appeared in the light of the new spirit that inflamed humanity. It flooded the world with a mighty wave of revolutionary

idealism. In Ireland it brought about the Rebellion of Easter, 1916. That armed revolt, as I have already intimated, came upon Ireland as a whole with as great a shock of bewilderment, not unmixed, at first, with apprehension, as it did upon the Irish Executive. It was the work of comparatively a handful of men who organised it in secret among the Irish Volunteers. While it lasted the people were puzzled as to what it meant. The leaders had been unknown to the mass of the people, even in Dublin, where they were most active, not to speak of the provinces. Unknown too were their aims and objects. Hardly anyone outside their original following flocked to their standard of revolt either in the capital or in the country. But when it was afterwards disclosed that the revolutionaries were a band of young men of the highest character and ability of whom any land might have been proud, and that they were shot in batches at dawn because their love of Ireland had impelled them to try to set her free by force of arms, then an intense sense of pride and sorrow was aroused among all classes. They were "Rebels," and as such were formally in the wrong. They would have been shot or hanged in any other country in like circumstances. Mercy and forbearance has never been a trait of rulers in dealing with armed revolts. But by the people the "Rebels" were regarded as being in the right—morally, politically, essentially. The Rebellion thus came to be looked upon as the noblest and most heroic expression of the faith and resolution of Irish Nationalism; and its

leaders were deemed worthy to rank as high comrades of the most venerated patriots of the past—Lord Edward FitzGerald, Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmet, Thomas Davis, John Mitchel. "A Republic was the martyrs' ideal. We must be faithful to it." Such was the almost universal vow. In that floodtide of national passion the Home Rule Party was submerged. They were either blamed for the position in which the country found itself—Home Rule refused, though it was on the Statute Book, and Conscription, the "blood tax" as it was called, threatened to be imposed—or else it was held they were of no further use. "Constitutionalism," said de Valera, the leader of the Republicans, "has come to a dead stop against a blank wall."

The curtain may be said to have fallen on the Home Rule movement—the federal movement inaugurated by Butt in 1870—when the new House of Commons assembled in February, 1919. In my time many strange scenes associated with Ireland have I looked down at from the Reporters' Gallery, and the most remarkable—to me, certainly, one I had never expected to see—was the spectacle presented in the "Irish quarter" below the gangway on the Opposition side. The benches were packed, but not a single Nationalist member was to be seen in the throng. The solid Irish phalanx that had sat there since 1880 had entirely vanished. All, all, were gone, the old familiar faces!

Then I noticed T. P. O'Connor standing at the Bar, carrying his 70 years with remarkable vitality.

He was the "Father of the House" by right of having had the longest unbroken service. He might also be called the last of the parliamentary Irish Nationalists. During the forty years he had been a member he was true and staunch to Home Rule—no one more so—and used for its advancement his brilliant powers as a writer, and a speaker, and, not least, his attractive social qualities. As he looked round the Chamber he saw the Irish benches filled with British Unionists, and not a vacant place where he himself could sit down.* On two of the Government benches, directly opposite, he saw the Ulster Unionists, about twenty strong with Sir Edward Carson, in the leader's corner-seat by the gangway. For the first time, since the agitation for Home Rule commenced, the Ulstermen were in the position of being the largest Irish Party in attendance at Westminster. T. P.'s ruminations would probably be best expressed by the verse from Moore's Irish Melody—

When I remember all
The friends so linked together,
I've seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garland's dead,
And all but me departed.

*Subsequently, by direction of the Speaker, three seats nearest to the gangway on the third bench were allotted to T. P. O'Connor, Joseph Devlin and Captain Redmond.

He might well grieve when even the shadow of that which was once so great had passed away.

But standing by the veteran's side at the Bar was a boyish-looking figure—small in stature, and thick-set, a strong, resolute face, shrewd, humorous eyes and a large head with coal-black hair. This was Joseph Devlin, among the most gifted and remarkable of the many men which the Irish Nationalist Movement brought into public life—a powerful and stirring speaker, able to cross swords in a dialectical duel, or in the sharper attack of retort, with any opponent on the front benches (not to speak of the back) and a true democrat. The two companions seemed to me to be standing in front of the fallen curtain, suggestive of an old player, whose days were over, about to introduce a young leader who would ably fill the stage when the curtain rose again, it might be at College Green, on a fresh parliamentary phase of the Irish Nationalist Movement, to be developed along new lines—those of Social Democracy, perhaps.

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